TV GAMER

THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO CASSETTE AND CARTRIDGE GAMES

OCTOBER 1984 85p

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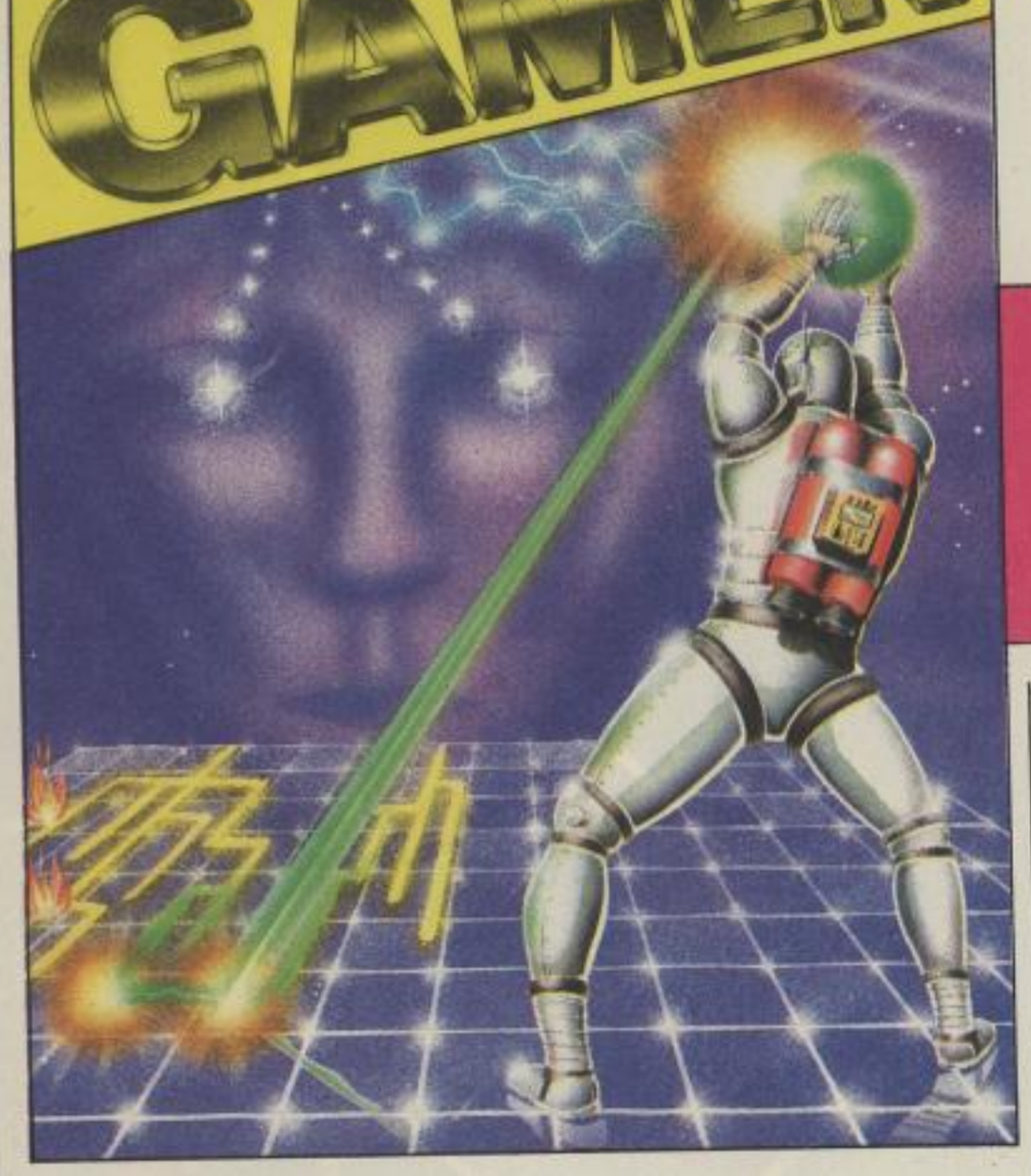

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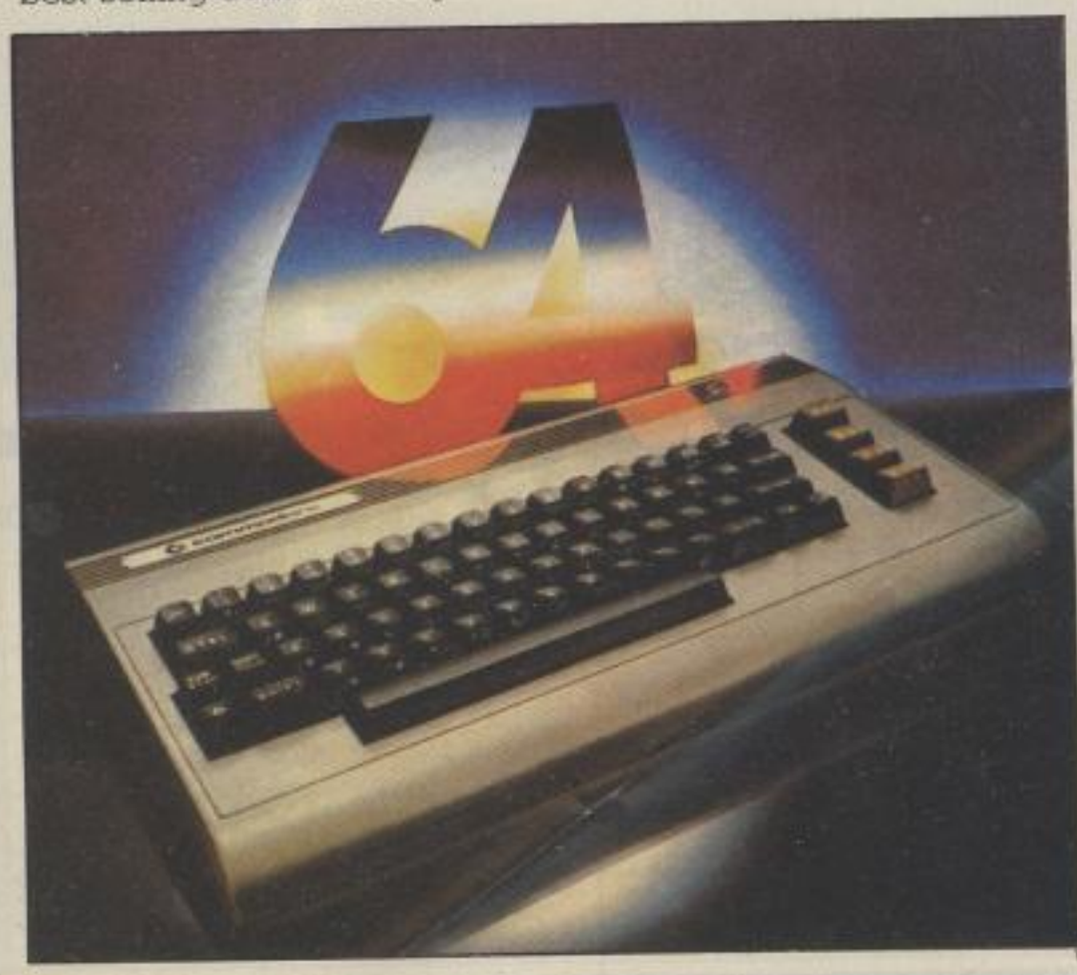

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EDITOR ONLINE

Hello to all you readers labouring under the burden of school or work, with memories of summer holidays slipping rapidly.

You're not alone! TV Gamer has been out on its feet, too. First there was the Old Ben walk from St Paul's to Lincoln's Inn in London. It was only three miles long – but there were thirty-seven registration checkpoints. TVG's managing director Richard Whinfrey, reporters Brian and Darrin Williamson with family, Jo Kearns, and Robin Judd and Sandra Robertson of the circulation department doggedly put their best feet forward to raise money for the Newsvendors' Benevolent Fund.

Then Teddy Neville – writer of Infantryman 2000 *in the September issue of TVG – walked (and crawled) forty miles to raise money for ASBAH. This is the association for spina bifidus and hydrocephalus. Starting at 7am on a misty Saturday morning, he finished wearily at 5am on a brightening Sunday morning. Twenty-two hours of slog! Must have got his training from hours on TVG.*

Then Darrin and Jo, accompanied by the irrepressible Dave Harvey, again tackled the streets of London. This time it was for a vox populi – or "what the people in the street say".

This marathon was tougher than any other. Starting on a Thursday, the intrepid interrogators finished the following Wednesday, trailing a "not quite himself" Dave behind them. Their travels included Lion Micros, Video Palace and Pilot Software – many thanks for their help. You can read the result in the next issue of TVG.

After all that endurance testing, producing this issue was easy.

Deirdre Boyd

YOU WON'T COPY THESE CASSETTES

Rosetech's high-street device to give you cartridge games about 30% cheaper now offers cassette games, too.

Rosetech had said it would not offer cassette games – although the machine has the capability – since profits would be lost through piracy. Now it is using the concept of audio signals to block copying – by home users at least.

"Cassettes cannot be copied on conventional recorders or downloaded on a data recorder – which makes it extremely difficult for people," managing director Michael Marks said. "If you wanted to spend time and money, obviously you could eventually copy." But it's cheaper for the casual copier to buy the games.

And it's the casual copier rather than the big firms who take away the profits. Marks mentioned inhouse research amongst schools. In one case he had talked to six girls with about 100 games each – two had been bought.

• **Another new anti-piracy system** comes from RED, or Rising Edge Data. This prevents mass copying but allows you to make back-up copies of original tapes.

The secret is a digitised security card resembling a credit card, and a reader unit which plugs into the computer. Each card carries a magnetic code identical to a program code in the game. So tapes can be copied, but they won't run without the card.

Below: Centre Soft and Ocean may well smile. Under the US Gold label, they're selling US games 66% cheaper.

"Joysticks are confined to the dustbin," Cheetah scathingly stated. Games have come a long way since the start of the micro boom – but what about joysticks? They've remained basically the same. Cheetah's RAT aims to change that.

The RAT is an infra-red joystick. It comes with a receiver/interface which plugs into the back of your Spectrum. Infra-red signals, transmitted from the RAT's "nose", are picked up by the infra-red diode in the front of the receiver. The frequency of the two are attuned, and you use it like your TV remote control. It operates on a different frequency so doesn't cause interference, and is effective up to 30 feet.

The RAT gives you a choice of up to eight directions and fire. As it has touch control with no moving parts, it should last longer than conventional joysticks.

Programmers can incorporate RAT compatibility into their games with a six-line program supplied by Cheetah in both Basic and machine code.

Made in the UK, orders for 40,000 RATs are already in. It sells for £29.95.

• Through new owner Parc Electronics, Cheetah also launched Megasound. This acts as an amplifier, so that sound comes through your TV's audio rather than the weaker micro's. It costs only £9.99.

Atari's first moves. The newly formed Atari Corporation (TVG, August) is slashing prices. The 600XL is now £99.99, a reduction of £50, and the 800XL £199.99, a reduction of £60.

Above: Joystick of the future? Cheetah's RAT uses infra-red signals, and promises to last longer.

The new prices are designed to make Atari more competitive with Commodore.

In a strict rationalisation, the 7800 ProSystem will be dropped. Latest production estimates said that units would cost more than £100 each, which would reduce sales "below an acceptable minimum".

Existing games will cost from £9.99 to £14.99, and Atarisoft games from £7.99 to £9.99. The Trak Ball is reduced by £20 to £19.99.

Following Valhalla's success is difficult. But creator Legend expects to do even better with *The Great Space Race*.

The game is due out early this month. "Technical effects never seen in home computer software" are promised. A new operating system called MoviSoft 2 is the method.

The Great Space Race is in two parts. In the first you must wheel and deal to get the best spaceships, weapons and personnel. The second is the race itself.

TOP GAMES

With the huge choice of new games – promising even bigger and better things – we sneaked a look at the sales books of busy superstore Virgin.

Some results are surprising. These ten games are the hottest sellers.

1 Matchpoint (Spectrum)
2 Lords of Midnight (Spectrum)
3 International Soccer (C64)
4 Micro Olympics (Spectrum)
5 Full Throttle (Spectrum)
6 Super League (Spectrum)
7 Daley Thompson's Decathlon (C64)
8 Beachhead (C64)
9 World Cup (Spectrum)
10 Valhalla (C64)

Above: Fox may have rights to Romancing The Stone – but Fox Games hasn't made it to the UK.

Bally Midway is saving arcade owners money. Its machine can interchange five games. First of these was *Up 'N Down*. Now comes *Mister Viking*.

In this game, you must retrieve the golden helmet, despite attacks from tornados, tanks and deadly skulls. Then you must penetrate the enemy fortress with stragegy, and locate the helmet. There are multiple-coin options, adjustable difficulty levels, bonus scores and number bases.

The third game in the series will be *SWAT*. In this, futuristic agents fight to stop the growth of two amoeba types.

Acorn goes to Ireland. Production of the BBC micro started there last month. It will be distributed by Lendac Data Systems. The target: over 20% of all home computer sales in Ireland before 1986.

We've joked about finding ZX81s in your cereal – but a Spectrum in your cornflakes? Eat your cereal, answer the questions on the box – and you could win one of the 100 on offer.

Thanks to our readers who sent in software to Oxfam in response to our July news item. Over £10,000 worth of cassettes have been received so far. They'll be sold to raise money for the needy.

The first megagames for the Spectrum and Commodore 64 are out. *Quo Vadis* for the C64 and *Psytraxx* for the Spectrum are arcade adventures featuring over 1,000 screens! *Quo-Vadis* costs £9.95 and *Psytraxx* £7.95.

The games come from the newly formed branch of Softex, The Edge. Also coming are *Star Bike* for the Spectrum (£6.95) and *Firequest* for the C64.

The film of the game: Romancing the Stone. The inspiration for this must have come from *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*. But this film has a slight twist: the central character is not the swashbuckling hero but a female romance novelist, Joan Wilder.

There are a few good chase scenes which could easily be translated into games. But Fox Games never made it from the US to here. So it looks unlikely a game will materialise this side of the Atlantic.

Lots of lucky readers have won goodies in our contests throughout the year. We haven't had the space to print all their names in past issues, so here's a brief round-up.

Winter 1983. Activision games to each of ten winners went to: Daniel Burges, Canterbury, Kent (. . .they've really got their ACTO-GETHER); R Antill, Hants; Tim Daniels, Essex; Andrew Halstead, Gtr Manchester; David Morgan, Canterbury, Kent; Geoffrey Read, Warsash, Hants; Fiona Sturrock, Edinburgh; Patsy Williams, Skegness, Lincs; Alex Mitchell, Nottingham.

An Adam computer went to each of three winners: Christian Wheeler, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales (623 words); Alan Grant, Uxbridge, Middlesex; James Hodgekiss, Bilston, West Midlands.

An Intellivision, Intellivoice module and *B17 Bomber* voice cartridge went to Paul David Double, Ipswich, Suffolk. A module and cartridge went to each of five runners up: Eric Hurd, Birmingham; P Gregory, Harrow, Middlesex; Andrew Gettings, Middlesboro, Cleveland; Deke Roberts, Oxford.

Vectrex and light pen: Chris Short, Tewkesbury, Glos.

March 1984. An Atari 600XL went to S Vickers, Harrogate, N. Yorkshire (Pacman, the game you can play between meals without ruining your appetite). An Atarisoft game went to five runners up: Ian McIntosh, London; Paul Davies, Dudley, West Midlands; Paul Torin, Gillingham, Kent; Tony Rivers, Hatfield, Herts; Richard Slack, Porthleven, Cornwall.

April 1984. A Spectrum 48K, peripherals and £400 of software went to Pamela Marchant, St Loyes, Exeter.

May 1984. A Sharp MZ-700 and three games went to G Alexander, Bristol. A TI 99/4a went to A Relyea, Blackpool.

Simon Hunt, author of English Software's Diamonds, holds the trophy awarded to Michael O'Mahoney for scoring 5,977 points.

Darrin Williamson rounds up new products for the BBC and Electron

Lots of you were probably at Olympia 2 during the summer holidays, when the second Acorn User show was on. *TV Gamer* was there also, hunting for bits of info to interest you.

There wasn't much new software around, which is unusual for one of these types of shows. Much of the emphasis seemed to be on hardware: add-ons and peripherals for the BBC B and the Electron. Let's go through what was on offer.

Video backgrounds for your computer games?

Abbey Audio had a computer locking device for the Beeb. This allows you to superimpose computer graphics onto other video signals, such as a VTR or a laser disc. This is currently being used exclusively for such things as captions for your own video films. But there is no reason why video backgrounds can't be used for games – rather like the coin-op *Bega Battles*.

Acorn had the Plus One add-on for the Electron. This allows the use of **Beeb-style joysticks and cartridge games** produced by Acornsoft.

It also allows a smattering of business software, which will no doubt take advantage of Plus One's other feature, the printer port.

Want to write a decent game?

Aries' sideways ROM board lets you do just that. As well as accepting fourteen pieces of ROM software, it will also allow you to add 20K extra RAM. So games writers can use the highest resolution modes while managing to keep enough RAM to write a decent game that also has decent graphics.

Music synthesis came from City Music. It showed a little attachment which allows you to connect your Beeb up to MIDI-equipped synthesizers, drum machines and sequencers. MIDI is a musical instrument digital interface.

This will allow you to compose using the Beeb's memory (more about that in a future issue).

Computer Concepts' new graphics ROM is a must for games writers who want an easier way to produce sprite graphics and short animated cartoons.

Also released was its Printmaster ROM. Among other things, this will do screen dumps of game screens – ideal for high scores.

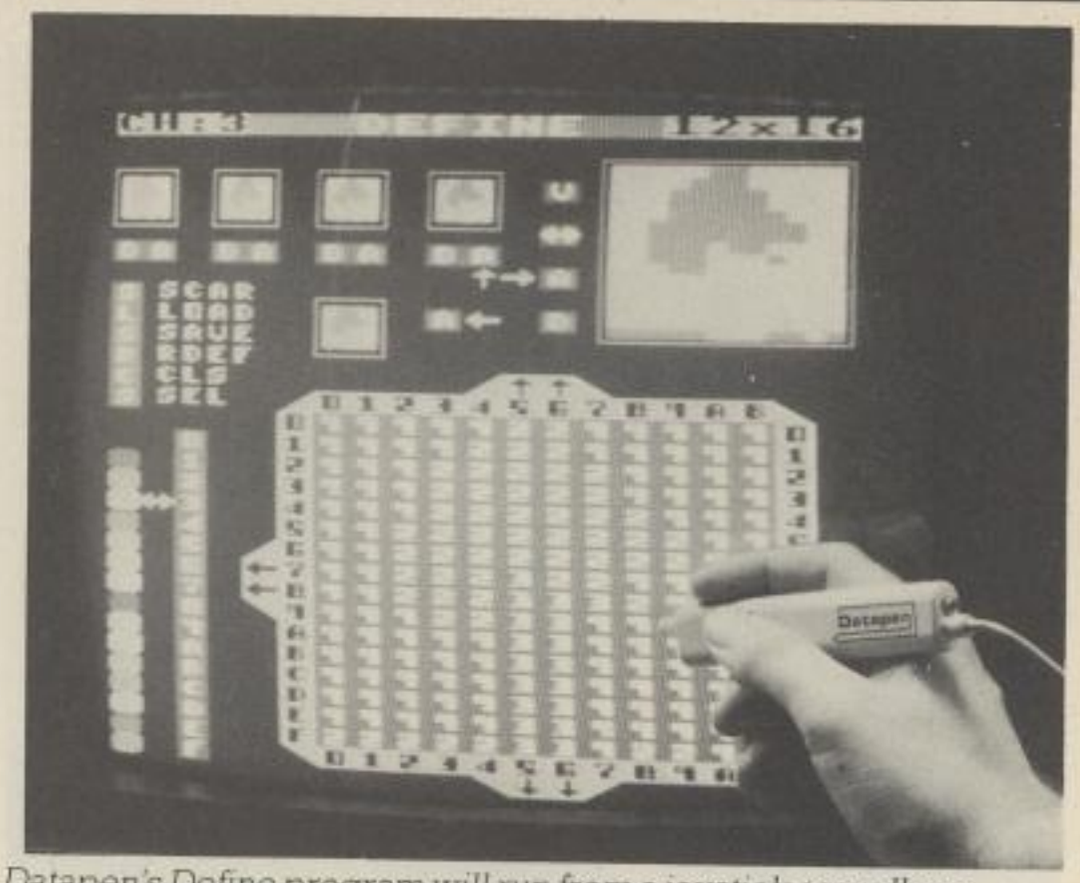
Cumana was showing its range of single or twin disc drive units which are completely Beeb compatible.

Disc drives are becoming more and pore popular with gamers as the prices go down. Several software houses, including market leaders such as Micro Power, are now releasing all their new titles on cassette and disc format.

Data Efficiency displayed the **Kaga/Taxan range of monitors.** This included the KX1202G, which reduces the flicker screen in some of the graphic modes.

Datapen Microtechnology showed off its **lightpen and accompanying software**. No games as yet, but there are some interesting drawing programs around. And games are planned for the future.

The answer to the Plus One came from First Byte Computers. Its joystick printer add on won't accept Acornsoft cartridges. But it will accept most popular printers and joysticks with the Atari-style connector.



Datapen's Define program will run from a joystick as well as a lightpen. You can start with multi-colour sprites up to 12x16 pixel, and test animation sequences.

Electron versions of most of Kansas City Systems' popular Beeb titles were at the show. These included *Cosmic Firebirds*.

The prototype synthesizer add on from the LVL group looked quite interesting. It opens up the world of sound creation at a low cost. Look out for a review of this in the near future.

Micro Power's latest game is *Dune Rider*. This is a *Moon Patrol* lookalike available on cassette and disc.

Ghouls, one of Micro Power's biggest sellers and a personal fave, is also now available on 40/80 track disc.

One of the few adventure games with sound is *Spooky Manor*. It was shown by Microwriter, which also had Quinky keyboards and educational game *Skram*.

Spooky Manor allows four people to play the same game, and will be available shortly from Acornsoft.

Pace's first game, *Fortress*, was on offer. For those of you who haven't seen it, it is one of the better Beeb versions of *Zaxxon*.

Fortress is the first and only game to come from Pace. We should see some more soon, judging by most people's reaction to the game at the show.

Low-cost graphics came with Reekie Technology's image plotter. You can use it to draw any shape in any of the Beeb's colours, in just one pixel if you like.

Sir Computers showed several Electron add-ons of interest, including joystick interfaces and a mode 7 adapter. This gives Teletext-style lettering which takes up only 1K of memory.

This should prove very useful for people writing text adventure games.

Two new games from Superior Software were also at the show. *Wallaby* is a *Kangeroo* lookalike, and *Smash and Grab* is a bit like *Blagger* but with fewer screens.

MRM Software had, in addition to its already impressive range of games software, a new game called Nightmare Maze which looks rather like the 3D Pac-Man *game.*

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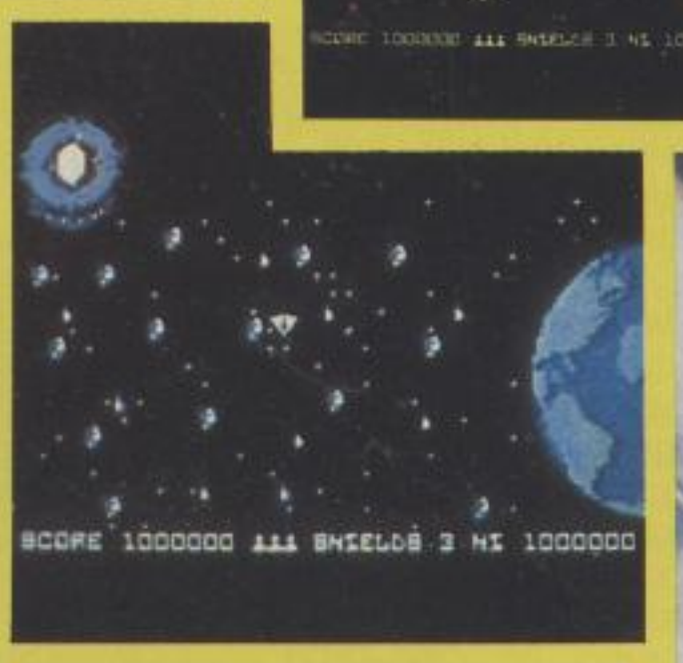

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FOUR-WAY GAMEPLAY

Two unusual ways of playing games on the BBC model B micro have recently been launched. Both break new ground in home games control.

The first is by a company called Magic Software. It is an adventure game called *Galaxy's Edge* – the first commercially available adventure game designed to work on two BBC B micros simultaneously.

Two players can not only explore the same game, at the same time, they can even bump into each other along the way.

There are two parts to *Galaxy's Edge*. *The Discovery* is a one-player game designed to break you in to the story. The second is *Escape from Solaris*.

The two Beebs communicate with one another with the aid of the RS423 socket located on the back. You'll have to find someone who is good at making computer leads, because you'll need a special one for this game. But don't worry: full instructions, including wiring diagrams, come with the game.

If this game is a success, it may open the way to a large number of multi-user games rather than like Micronet's *Starnet*.

The second innovation is by a company called Quinkey, which now owns the rights to the Microwriter QWERTY keyboard replacement. These are cropping up just recently in schools and colleges, and have been used in a business capacity as a word processor for several years.

Quinkey links four BBC micros together – so four players can struggle against each other.

It is also a fast means of keyboard entry for adventure games. The first of these has been written by Acornsoft and is called *Spooky Manor*. Sales of this will be analysed before any more games will be made for the system.

It certainly sounds like a good idea. Think of the *Star Raiders*-type game you could have using a Quinkey with a joystick. You could have about thirty controls.

A full review of Quinkey will be published in the next issue of *TV Gamer*.

DIARY

OCTOBER

Electron & BBC Micro User Show
Alexandra Palace,
Wood Green, London N22
Entry: £3 Adults,
£2 Children
Thursday 25th 10:00-18:00
Friday 26th 10:00-18:00
Saturday 27th 10:00-18:00
Sunday 28th 10:00-16:00
Group tickets available.
Contact: Database

Bristol Personal Computer and Home Technology Show
Bristol Exhibition Complex,
Canon's Road, Bristol
Entry: £1.50 Adults
£1.00 Children
Friday 26th 10:00-18:00
Saturday 27th 10:00-18:00
Sunday 28th 10:00-18:00
Monday 29th 10:00-18:00
Organised by: Nationwide Exhibitions

NOVEMBER

Leisuretronics
Royal Horticultural Hall
Victoria, London
Entry: £1.50
Thursday 8th 10:00-18:00
Friday 9th 10:00-18:00
Saturday 10th 10:00-18:00
Sunday 11th 10:00-16:00

The 6809 Colour Show
(for Dragon and Tandy users)
Royal Horticultural Hall,
Victoria, London
Entry: £2 adults
accompanied under-21s £1
Saturday 17th 10:00-18:00
Sunday 18th 10:00-17:00
Organised by: Computer Marketplace

Your Computer Christmas Fair
Olympia, London
Friday 30th 10:00-18:00
Organised by: Reed

DECEMBER

Your Computer Christmas Fair
Olympia, London
Saturday 1st 10:00-18:00
Sunday 2nd 10:00-18:00
Organised by: Reed

Electron & BBC Micro User Show
New Horticultural Hall,
Victoria, London
Entry: £3 Adults,
£2 Children
Thursday 6th 10:00-18:00
Friday 7th 10:00-18:00
Saturday 8th 10:00-18:00
Sunday 9th 10:00-16:00
Group tickets available.
Contact: Database

The facts in this list have been checked for accuracy, but no responsibility can be accepted for errors or omissions.

MICRONET UPDATE

Lorraine Cox continues her look into Micronet, the world's largest microcomputing database, and reports on some new discoveries.

You've heard of electronic mail, which enables you to send messages via the telephone wires to any of the 43,000 Prestel users in just two seconds. There's also Contact, a general access area displaying questions or opinions to up to 10,000 other users.

Even more exciting is Micronet's new Chatline service. It's explained on page * 811 # of Micronet, and is a unique way of linking thousands of users around the country.

Chatline is open in the evenings. You can then send a message to the Chatline response frame, and see it appear on the net in about fifty seconds. All messages received simultaneously are collected and sent back to the mainframe computers on a cycle of 100 pages.

Once online, you can see the next message by keying 2, see the previous message by keying 1, or compose your own by keying 8 to get a blank page. If messages exceed 100, earlier messages are automatically over-written. It's the electronic alternative to CB radio!

If you fancy yourself as an adventure whizz-kid, look at Adventure Contacts on page *6004074 #. Here's a few examples of the latest entries.

- S Kelly asks "how do I get the staff from the witch in the castle, and the master key from the dragon in *Twin Kingdom Valley*?" He's also having trouble avoiding the guards.
- David, on the other hand, offers money for good information on maps on all the Infocom adventures. And 'Supastu' Stuart Menges generously offers free advice to anyone stuck in a Level 9 adventure. If you're stuck, why not mailbox him? Better still, if you think you know the answers to any adventure problems, mailbox Micronet with your advice.

"How can a Beeb sound as if it's playing the bagpipes?" This was an unusual question raised by a member recently. We hope we found the answer in Musicnet, Micronet's music database.

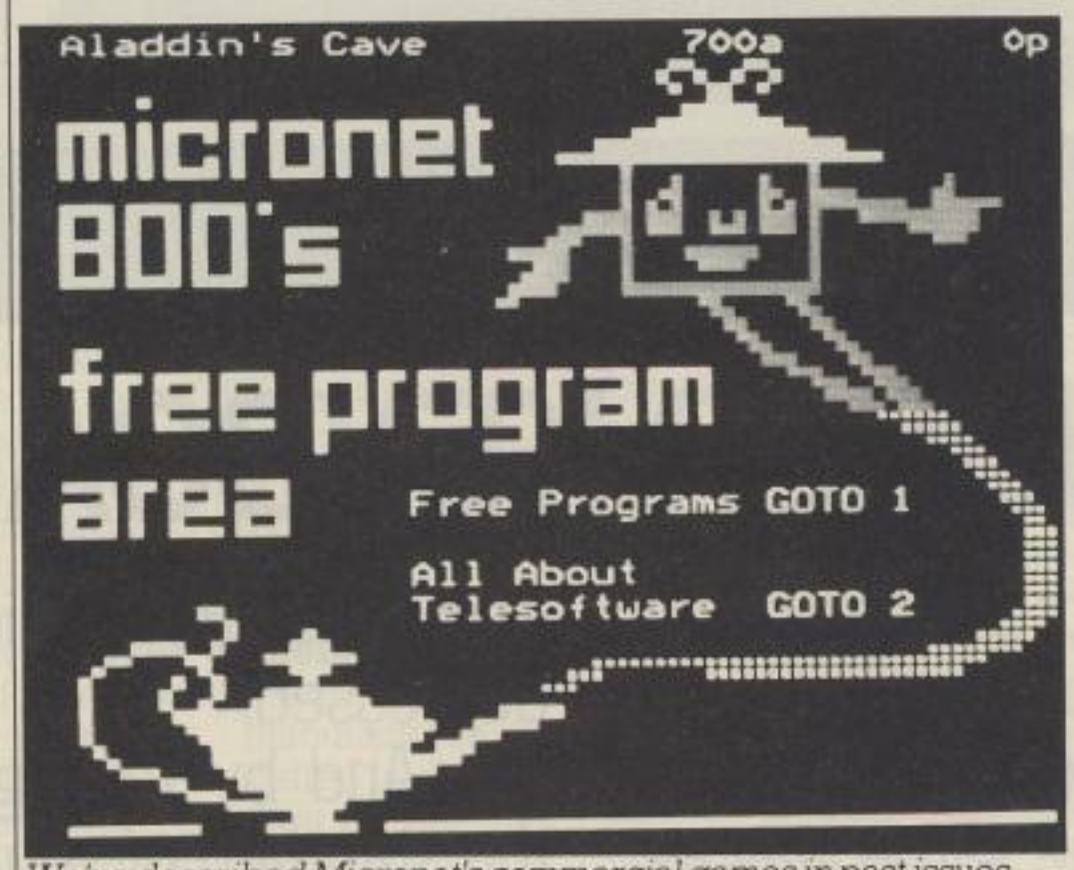
One of Musicnet's current features is *Computers in Music* by Jullian Gough. It begins by describing the part computers play in simple sound generation. The musical capabilities of the micro are quite crude, but with a little practice you can achieve some surprising results. The Spectrum, for example, can produce notes of different pitches and lengths, but the quality of sound is not resolute.

The BBC and Commodore 64 each have a separate sound chip to control a variety of sounds. There are three sound channels and one noise channel. The sound channels are independent of each other, while the noise channel can be used to provide a percussion effect. Each sound channel has a surprising range of about five or six octaves.

The sound quality produced varies from micro to micro. The kind of sound wave produced by a computer must be unaffected by distortion, so it is not a pure sound wave. It fails to convince that real music is being produced.

The simplest and most efficient way to produce music, Jullian says, is to cheat and use special music programs. They allow you to compose, transpose and edit your own music easily.

Among the music programs on Micronet, is *Music* by IJK Software. Route to the telesoftware and to page * 600611109 #. This program displays a pattern corresponding to a tune. You can break into the pattern and write your own tunes! If your ability to read music needs brushing up, don't give up. Go to page * 600611990 # to download some software for just that! *Reading Music Made Easy* by Childsplay Software has received first class reviews from BBC Television.



We've described Micronet's commercial games in past issues – now for the freebies.

Talking of sound generation, if you have a Spectrum micro, route to page * 600614257 #. Here you'll find a downloadable program called *Sound FX* which will enable you to obtain great sound effects – ZAP!, BANG!, CRASH!, BOOM! and more! If you enjoy writing your own games, this utility program could be used to great advantage.

FREE GAMES

In previous articles on Micronet, we've described some of the commercial chargeable software. There are also many programs free of charge. This area is called Aladdin's Cave *(left)* and begins on page * 700 #.

For the BBC micro there's *Paras*, an action-packed arcade game on page * 700373175 #. Your objective is to shoot down the paratroopers before they land. You'll find out it's more difficult than it sounds. Also by Acorn User is *Mover* on page * 700373176 #, a sprite animation program for downloading. It's written in Basic and machine code.

Still for the BBC is the highly acclaimed *Mr Shifter* by MRM. According to Micronetters this game is a big winner. Go to page * 80011560 # to find out what they think! In *Mr Shifter* you are a postman whose task it is to send off four random moving parcels in a short time. Manoeuvring the parcels, avoiding the No Entry signs, and removing the weighing machines increase your bonus. This program has great graphics and super sounds. Go to * 700373154 # to download it.

If you're a Spectrum owner, try the latest free favourite – *Moonbug* on page * 700670269 #. You're inside a buggy on the moon and must steer your craft through mazes to reach a safety zone. This game's very simple but highly recommended if you like games for their addictiveness.

Another popular freebie for the Spectrum is *Chinese Horoscope*, voted August winner of the month by our subscribers. Beginning at page *700670291 #, you can find out all about yourself the Chinese way. First you work out which animal represented the year of your birth, then discover your compatibility with the stars.

If you'd like to find out what the future holds for us, Micronet has an evolving feature on *The Computers of the Fifth Generation Project*. It's easier to read than it's name! It's a window through which to see, in some depth, how computers may develop in the future and shape our destiny.

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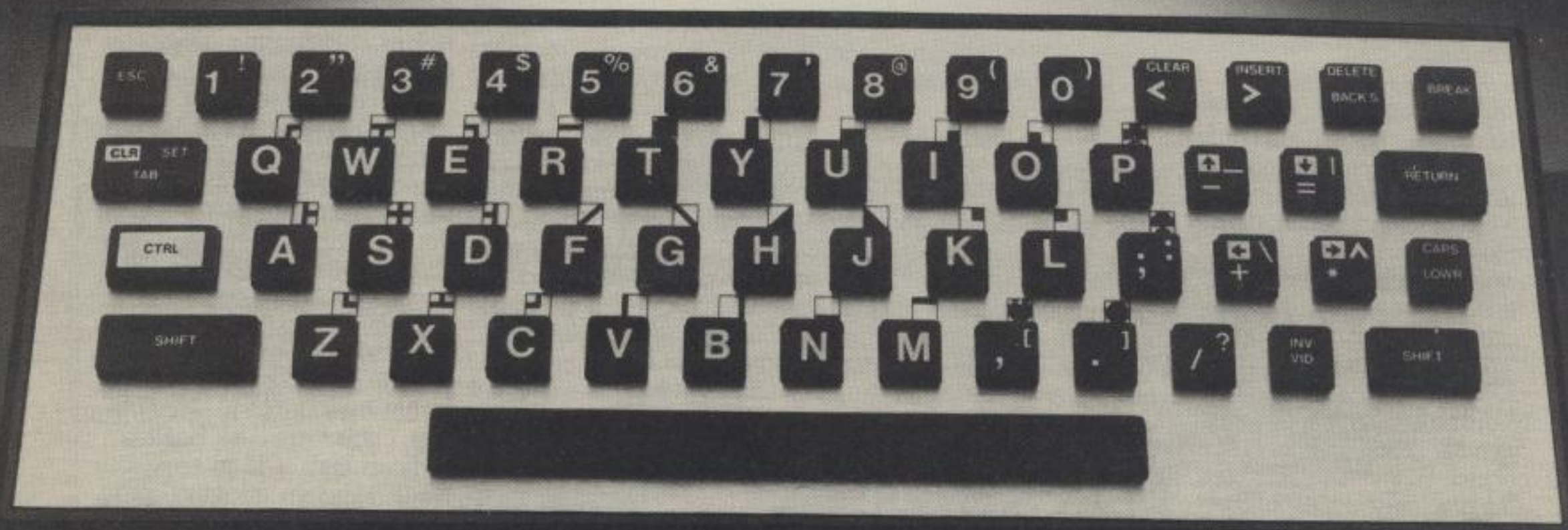

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SP

Piracy in the arcades

As here, software piracy threatens otherwise plain-sailing companies in the US. But there it's the arcade versions that are ripped off. And it's rubbing salt into the wound when the ripoff beats the original into the arcades. That's what happened to the *Naughty Boy* creators.

Most ripoffs are made in the Far East where there are no copyright laws to protect video games. And it's cheaper: labour is inexpensive, the logic boards are copies, and there are no designers to pay.

The bad news for gamers is that the machines are low quality and can ruin your game. Flimsy plywood cabinets, sometimes second hand, replace the normal ones. Even the controllers change. The trackball in an Italian copy of *Centipede*, for example, was replaced by a joystick. It moved in only four directions, had one fire button instead of two, and no rapid fire option.

Atari hires detectives to find the ripoffs, and Nintendo has seized over 700 *Donkey Kong* imitations. You won't find them in arcades or other popular areas. Instead they turn up in small sites, such as restaurants and garages.

How do you know your game is a ripoff? Here are some of the most obvious.
Centipede: Bug Blaster, Worm War, Buggy, Centipedes, Bug Attack.
Defender: Mayday, Defence Command, Depender, Defenders, Mutant Attack, Baiter Attack, Humanoid Rescue.
Donkey Kong: Crazy Kong, King Kong, Congorilla.
Frogger: Frogs, Frog, Hopperty.
Ms Pac-Man: Mrs Pac-Man, Ms Pac-10, Pac-3, Pac-4.
Pac-Man: Pack-Man, Puck-Man, Pak-Man, Pop Man, Munch Man, Speedy, Cruiser, Gobbler, New Puc, Pirahna, Cruncher, Bucaneer, Barracuda, Mighty Mouth, Eager Eater.
(List courtesy Computer Games, New York)

Do you sweat a lot? Seriously, US players can buy mittens with just one full finger – the joystick firing one. Called video game gloves, they stop your hand slipping on the joystick.

Also on the subject of trigger fingers, can you fire twenty shots a second? Questar manufactures a device called Blaster which lets you do just that. The joystick plugs into one side of it, and it then plugs into the Vic-20, Atari or Coleco systems.

Circus Charlie is coming into your home. The popular arcade character (TVG, July) leaps through burning hoops, tiptoes across high-wires, balances on rolling balls, jumps on trampolines and swings from a trapeze. . . all for your pleasure. The Commodore 64 and Coleco boast five separate screens, the Atari VCS four.

Pac-Man on wheels. This converted school bus holds ten arcade games and up to forty players. You'll pay $90 per hour if you want it for parties.

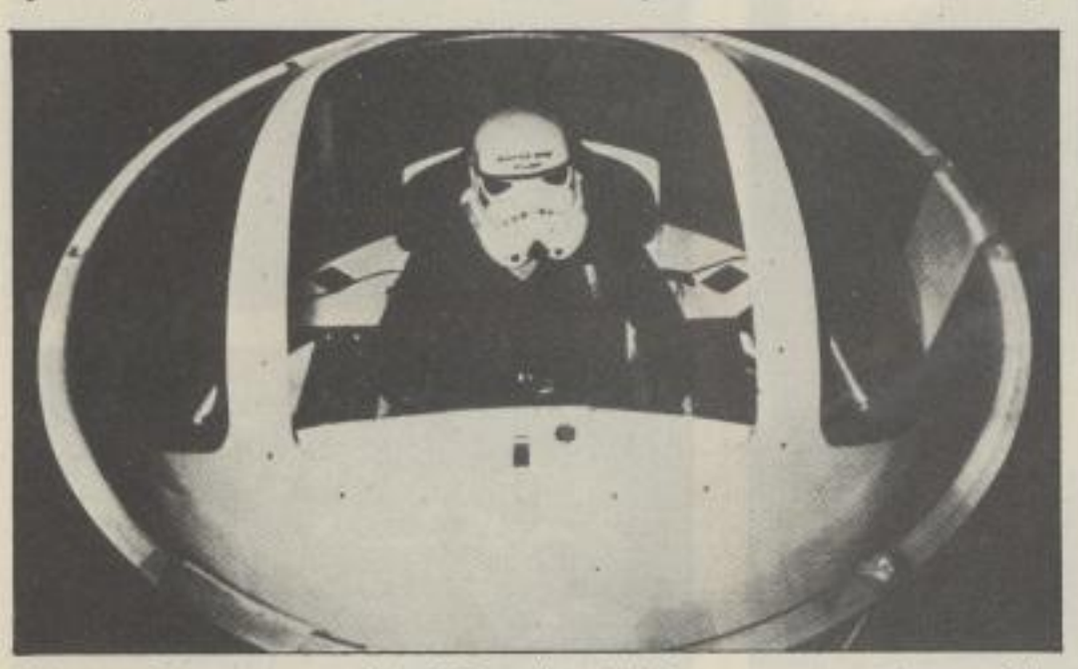
The game you love to hate. *Abuse* from Don't Ask Software hurls insults with relish and is no respecter of courtesy. The following conversation was overheard between it and one Shay Addams of leading US magazine *Computer Games*. He must be a masochist.
SA: Shall I call you Mr Abuse or just Abuse?
Abuse: I don't care what you call me, you wretched bucket of slop! Just don't touch me.
SA: I didn't touch you. But I do have to type my questions in on the keyboard.
Abuse: Why don't you imitate a bowl of oatmeal instead?
SA: That's not very nice. I'm beginning to wonder if this interview was such a good idea after all.
Abuse: Why don't we change the subject, you babbling cretin?
SA: OK. What about the situation in the Middle East?
Abuse: You're too slow for me. Let me show you how this is done. You say "What's up, you stupified clod". I say "May your next-door neighbour french fry your face". You say "Go vomit garbage". I respond with "May a dissipated itinerant labourer laminate your left nostril".
(At this point, the conversation must be censored.)

You could kick yourself time. The successful *Miner 2049er* was rejected by two arcade game manufacturers before it became a computer game. Now it's available in multi-formats, and three sequels are planned. The first is *Scraper Caper*.

20th Century Fox, Paramount and MCA are all shooting extra scenes in their films – to be turned into laser games.

No more language lessons? The World Walker, invented by Raymond McCormack, will convert English into Spanish, French, German or Japanese, and vice versa. Only slightly larger than a pocket calculator, it uses a micro to respond in a clear, human-like voice.

The initial vocabulary is 600 words and phrases, with an equal number in the foreign language. Two add-on modules give an extra 200 words and phrases each. Due out this month, it costs about $239.



Want to fly a space ship? Promised this year are coin-op ships which dip and hover on a 140 mph column of air. Built-in lasers blast enemy ships picked up on TV screens.

Programmer Bob Polin: Blue Max II is on the way.

THE ARCADE SCENE

Most video and computer games are based on arcade favourites. So Andy Harris toted a pocketful of 10 pence pieces to suss out the latest games forerunners.

When you first set eyes on *Us vs Them* by Mylstar, it may well look familiar. This is because it was probably a *M.A.C.H. 3* machine in a previous incarnation and has been converted using new cabinet graphics, a new logic board and a new video disc.

Apart from the fact that it's a laser disc game, *Us vs Them* is notable for three reasons.

First, it wins my vote for the most unimaginative game title ever. Secondly, it contains some of the worst acting ever seen in public. Thirdly, the acting is so appalling that it's hilariously funny at times. *Us vs Them* is the first arcade game that has ever had me laughing out loud.

The game action begins in the control room of an unidentified fighter command base. Everything is calm and the 'planes are proceeding on course. Then suddenly one of the pilots reports "We're being attacked by unidentified flying objects".

At this point, the action switches to the great outdoors. There, sure enough, strange craft are hurling photon torpedoes at the hapless earthling fighter plane. Fortunately, you are equipped with the necessary equipment to fight back: joystick control with fire button and two other buttons which, at various times, are used either for firing to the front or to the rear.

Your craft is also fitted with a shield to protect from enemy fire and collisions, the remaining strength of the shield being shown at the bottom of the screen. Being hit by the aliens reduces the strength considerably. But collisions with stationary objects such as trees is less serious. It's possible to get extra shield power by shooting the hedrons – little twelve-sided objects which dart around the screen at high speed.

There are thirteen rounds in *Us vs Them*. The action takes you across rural America, over Chicago, through mountain ranges, across the Golden Gate bridge and, finally, up into the aliens' mother-ship in a desperate attempt to destroy its reactor and save Earth.

Visuals from the video disc are superb, as you would expect. But the relative scale of your plane to its surroundings varies in a disconcertning fashion.

For most sequences, play tactics are the same as for other similar games – just shoot the opposition and avoid being shot.

The banking controls take a bit of getting used to. They are used to good effect in the forest sequence, and also when travelling through the mother ship. At this point, you must negotiate a series of slots; this can be achieved only by banking your craft and squeezing through. Meanwhile, back in the forest, you must avoid hitting the trees and this is again done by judicious use of the banking and left-right controls.

"This is just like playing in a video game," observes the pilot.

These effects work very well indeed, and add greatly to the overall feeling of realism.

Another feature is one that was first used on *Punch Out* and which you'll

THE ARCADE SCENE

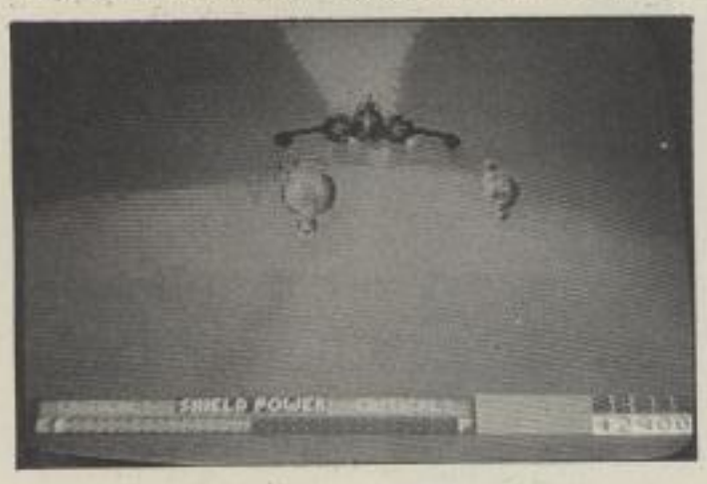
be seeing a lot more of in future. It's known as add-a-coin and enables players to continue a game from where they left off for half the cost of starting again from scratch.

So, if when entering the mother ship, you are destroyed by the aliens or crash, you are given the opportunity to insert another coin and continue the battle at the point where you left it. Unfortunately, add-a-coin is offered only up to round ten. As there are thirteen rounds in all, reaching the game's conclusion can be an expensive business.

By now you may be wondering what it was that made me laugh so much while playing *Us vs Them*. Apart from the appalling acting and lines such as "Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a crisis situation here", the action is interrupted every so often by scenes showing peoples' reactions to the events going on in the skies over their heads.

A family having a picnic look up in horror; a bespectacled gent, surprisingly similar to Clark Kent in appearance, begins to remove his coat; a country bumpkin exits from the outside lavatory, looks up and rushes back in again.

It's all so corny but it does give the player a chance to rest the trigger finger between battles, as well as

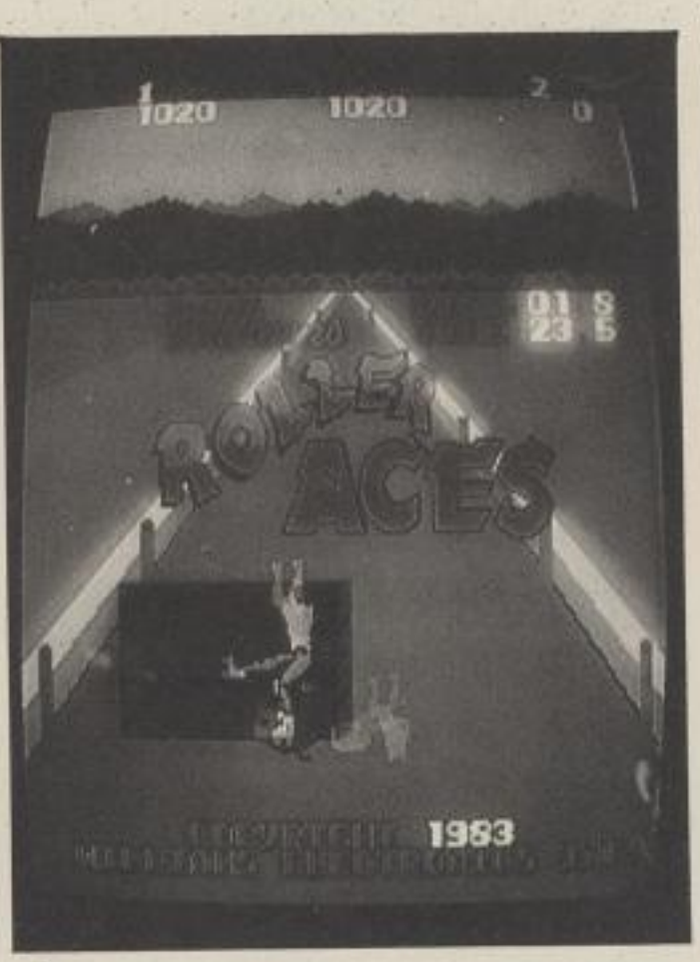


providing some good laughs.

Us vs Them is a fine example of how laser disc technology can combine with the chip and provide more than just realistic background scenes.

I don't expect the game's designers intended it, but you can have fun on this game without putting any money in.

Even so, I don't think you'll be able to resist this one. Start saving.



It seems that game designers have got a thing about the great pyramids of Egypt. Recently they've been featured, along with the Sphinx, in *Bomb-Jack*. Here they are again in *Roller Aces* by Williams.

It's rather similar to many driving games, starting off with a qualifying event before going on to the race proper. The difference, as the game's title suggests, is that you are on roller skates instead of driving a car. The race includes day and night scenes, and probably a space section, as well. I didn't get far enough to find out.

The obstacles along the way include holes in the road, walls, pillars, rocks and two other skaters who have the unsportsmanlike habit of trying to punch you to the ground at every available opportunity.

You must jump the holes and rocks, dodge the pillars and thump the other skaters before they thump you.

It's a pretty basic game. The scenery remains static, and both the visuals and the sound effects are uninspiring.

Being a peaceful sort of chap, I don't like to admit this: as far as I'm concerned, the best bit is punching the opposition and sending them sprawling all over the road. But after a while even this bit of excitement began to pall, and I started to wonder why this game is such a dud.

The main trouble is that it's so unrealistic. Roller skaters just don't use country roads with gaping holes and brick walls scattered about. They use city streets where the main hazards are likely to be stray dogs and manhole covers.

You're unlikely to be attacked by a fellow skater, either; an accidental collision with an unwary jogger is more probable.

If more thought had been given to *Roller Aces*, a good original game could have resulted, and Williams could have a hit on its hands. As it is, *Roller Aces* isn't going to be rolling for very long before it gets transported to the great arcade in the sky. Save your money.

If you were to judge all games on first impressions, you would probably dismiss *Formation Z* by Jaleco as being a hopelessly dated effort put out by a company you'd never heard of, for reasons known only to the directors of that company. That was the opinion I formed and I would like to take this opportunity to admit I was wrong.

The thing that redeems this game, for me at least, is a neat little trick that occurs when you keep two of the control buttons depressed for a few seconds.

Before I go any further I'd better explain what *Formation Z* is all about. The player controls a figure who is gingerly making his way across a rocky, barren landscape. Every so often he is attacked by creatures and objects both on the ground and in the air. He defends himself with a gun which can be raised or lowered and he can also jump to clear objects on the ground. This is where the fun starts.

Keep the jump button depressed for about three seconds and the little figure turns into an aircraft, enabling you to attack the airborne opponents more effectively. Press the fire button for a similar length of time, and the result is powerful cannon fire instead of a machine-gun effect, allo-

THE ARCADE SCENE

wing you to destroy certain extra-tough targets.

Hazards along the way include the usual volcanoes, alien space ships, robots, and so on. If you manage to avoid that lot successfully, you find yourself in space. You face even more hostility from assorted beings from other worlds.

This is not a classic game, not an all-time great by any means. What it has going for it is the fact that it provides consistent, high-scoring fun and amusement. What more do you want?

Although it's been around for a while now, *Tapper* by Bally hasn't really caught on over here. That's a pity, because it's a good little game despite its apparent simplicity. The player operates on behalf of a barman whose job, naturally enough, is to keep his customers supplied with beer.

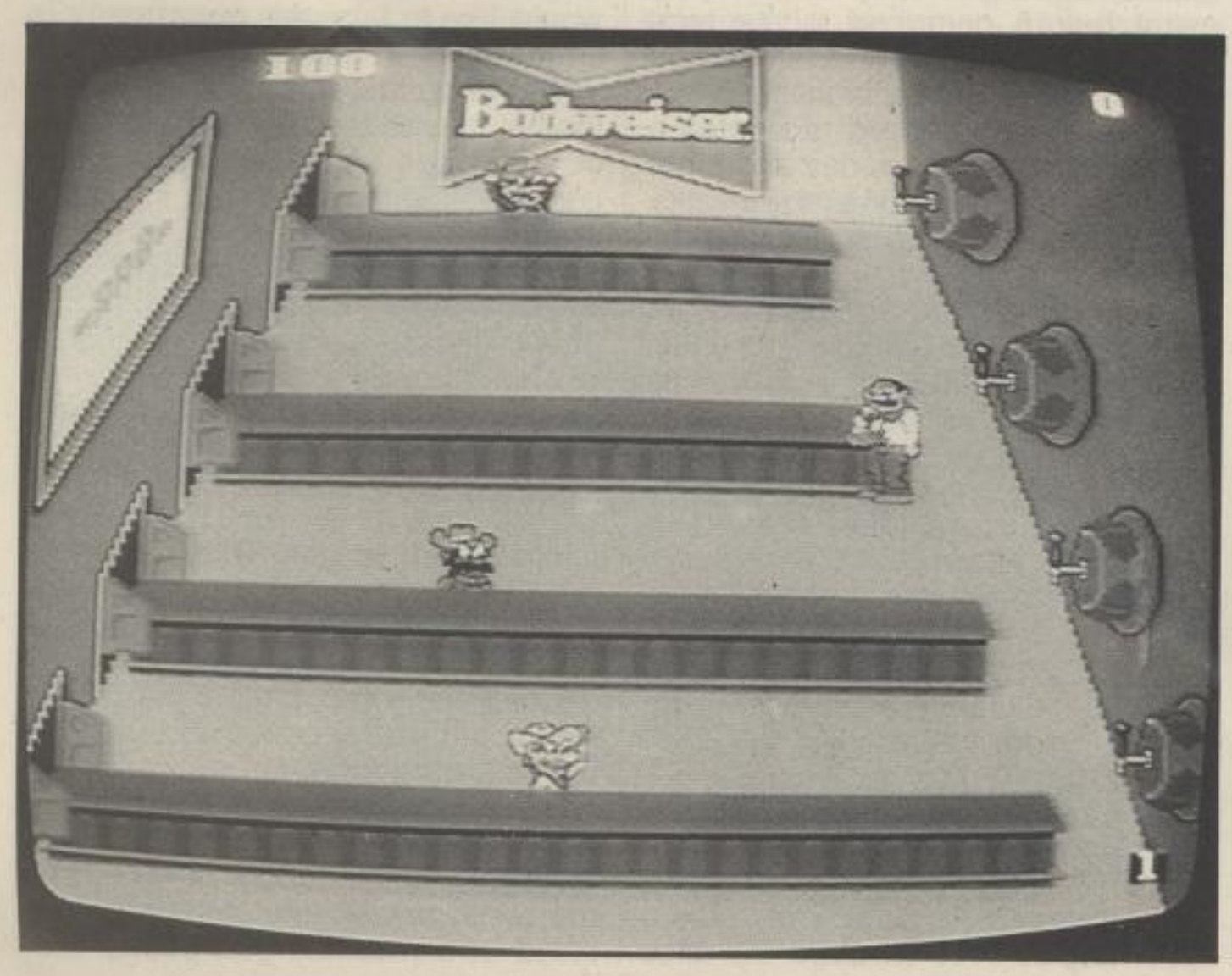
In the western-stype saloon, the customers have a substantial thirst. You must dash from bar to bar to keep up with them before they reach the end of the bar, and vent their thirsty frustration on the barman. Don't serve more beers than you have customers, though!

When the dancing girls appear on stage, some of your customers will turn to watch. So if you send a beer down the bar for them, it's just going to drop off the end.

If you manage to serve everyone without too many accidents, the barman has a beer to celebrate. You then move on to a fairground scene where the customers are even thirstier than they were in the saloon. There are more of them, as well, and things get very hectic. Empty glasses are sent up the bar and you must send full ones back down.

Survive the fairground, and you get promoted to a *Star Wars*-type bar with some very strange patrons. They look as though a nice, cool beer is the last thing on their minds.

The player controls comprise a button to get you down the bar to collect the empty glasses and tips, and a serve control which is the same as the beer dispenser taps found in American bars. To add to the authentic bar room feel of the game, there's a brass foot rail on the cabinet, useful for resting weary feet on at the end of a long, hard session.



Comparing *Pit & Run* to *TX-1* (TVG, September) is like comparing *Space Invaders* to *Astron Belt*. That's not to say that *Pit & Run* isn't a good game. It's just that the technology used and the presentation are light years apart.

Pit & Run is a regular stand-up machine with four-way joystick and a 'go' button. The idea is to drive round the track, pass the other cars, and score lots of points.

There are four courses in all. Before you change from one to another, you must complete several trials. As your car races along, various obstacles appear: rain, ice, flaming cars, and thunderbolts.

A fuel indicator gives warning of low fuel supplies and you can go into the pits to stock up on go-juice. At certain points in the game, the car can be turbo-charged, again by entering the pits.

There is also a night driving section. This is particularly difficult, as only a small cone of track is visible in the headlights.

Judged on its own merits, *Pit & Run* is not a bad game. The action constantly changes and it's quite entertaining. But when placed up against a *TX-1, Pole Position* or *Laser GP*, it is in a different league. Enjoy it while you can.

Poseidon is rather like an underwater version of *Scramble*.

The action takes place on the seabed and involves rescuing stranded divers and defending yourself against hostile forces, such as divers, sharks, and mines.

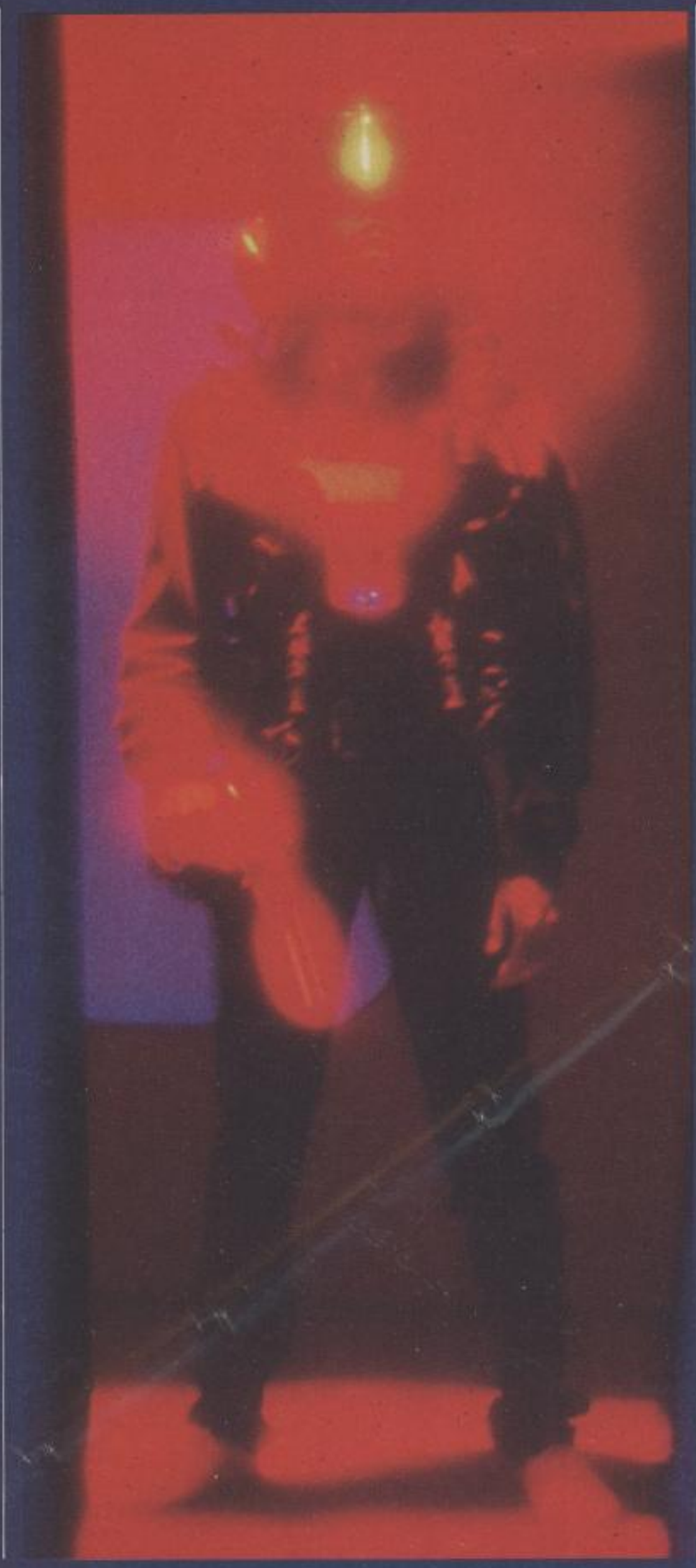
A particularly good feature is that you can switch underwater vehicles when you run low on fuel. Do this by hitting an enemy frogman with a torpedo and then pressing the release button to escape from your doomed vehicle to the new one. You now have a full tank and can recommence battle with your sub-aquatic foes.

It's not a breathtakingly original game and the graphics and sound effects are not very exciting. But for all that *Poseidon* is fun. And that, when all is said and done, is what counts. □

PHOTON

EXCLUSIVE

Planet Photon has been called 'the living video game'. And it's coming to 100 US cities this year, Deirdre Boyd reveals.



An alien planet in – where else – Dallas, Texas. It's called Photon. And it's the first totally new, high technology, life-sized "living video game".

"The film *Tron* prefigured in an important way what we are doing with Photon," Photon Amusements president George Carter III explained.

"Everyone who has put a quarter in an arcade machine, and watched as a cosmic light-and-sound show exploded on the screen, must have thought 'Wow! Wouldn't it be something to crawl inside and get into the action'. Now, with Photon, they can."

Players wield light phasers that win – or lose – points in a computer-controlled contest of wiles, wits and agility. They compete against themselves and against time in a spacious, other-worldly setting of experimental electronic music, pulsing lights, swirling fog and alien-planet props.

Players in the surrealistic 10,000 square foot "extraterrestrial territory" during the Dallas attraction's first year will wear the components of space-age warfare. That includes helmets with high-frequency radio transmitters and receivers, laser 'guns' that trigger sensors when striking target, high-energy battery belts, and a vest that contains a microprocessor to analyse and report on activities.

Players will join one of two teams of up to ten warriors each. They begin the Photon game on opposite sides of a heavily carpetted and catacombed playing area, and must battle their way to the other team's home base.

Meanwhile, they must avoid spasmodic ten-second computerised disarmings of their own weapon. This occurs if they are struck by photons – particles of light – by the opposition or by narrow light beams that occasionally erupt from the alien planet.

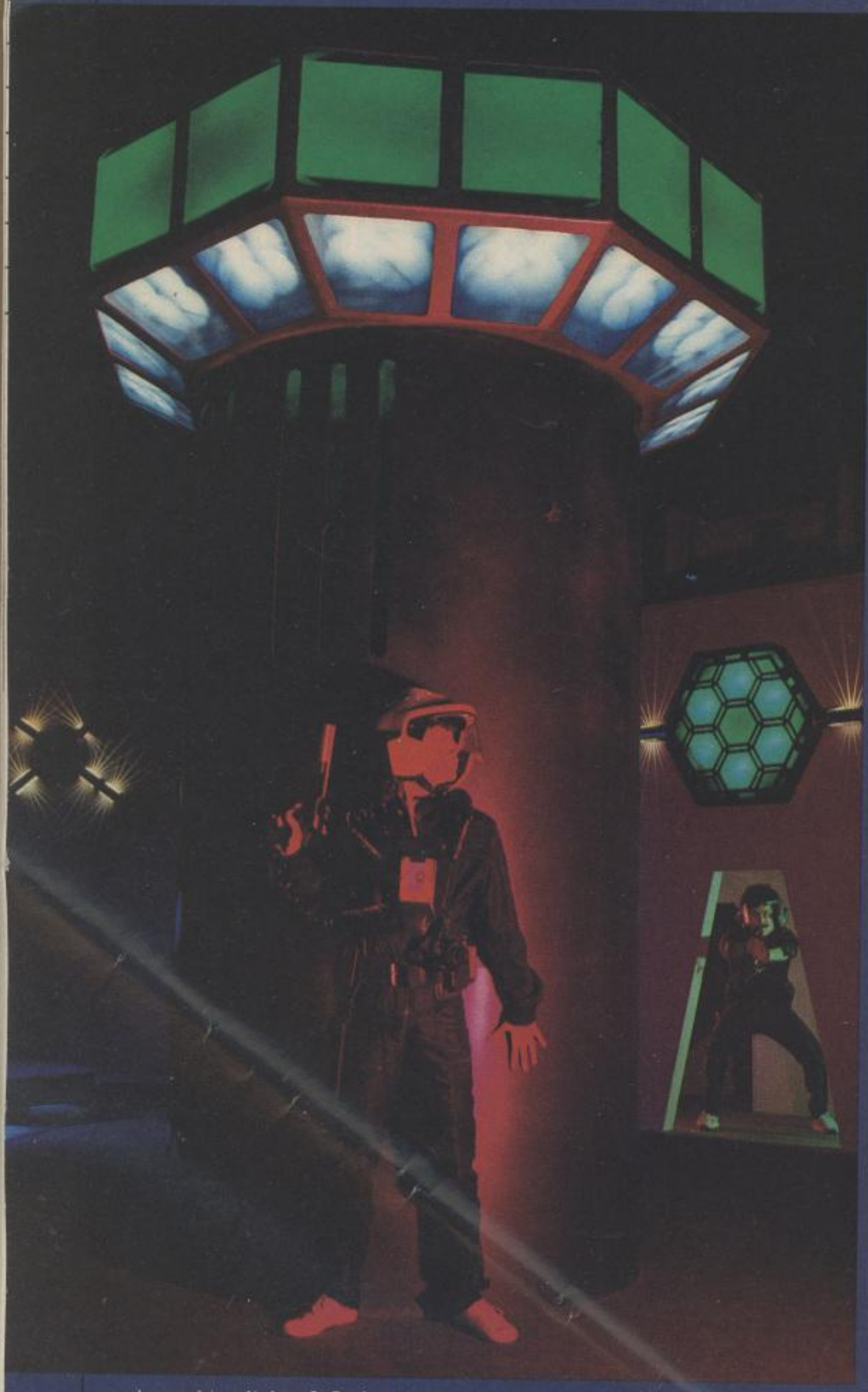
Players can build up scores two or three points at a time by 'disrupting' members of the opposition and avoiding being disrupted themselves. Getting through to the opposing team's home base is worth twenty-five bonus points.

What exactly does the game involve? Let's go through it stage by stage.

A Photon warrior is a player on a Photon team. The mission is to penetrate the opposition's base, shoot its goal, and score as many points as possible.

A Photon phaser uses light beams to shoot opposing players, and shoot the opposition's base goal.

A Photon helmet indicates which team you are on, with red or green markings



and matching lights. It flashes yellow when a player is disrupted by an opposing player's phaser.

Disrupted is what happens to a player when hit by a light beam from an opponent's phaser. That player's phaser will not work for the next ten seconds.

A Photon control module is worn by warriors. If struck by a light beam from an opposing player's phaser, it will disrupt its wearer.

The power pack holds batteries which power all Photon space gear.

Game commanders are referees who control each game and enforce all rules. They have the power to warn or remove any rule-breaking warrior from the game.

Red and green base goals are the teams' bases. If an invader gets behind one and shoots it, he gets twenty-five points.

The earth port observation deck is high above the game floor. From here, visitors and potential Photon warriors can watch games.

A strategic manoeuvre report is a video screen and printout which displays each player's score during the game.

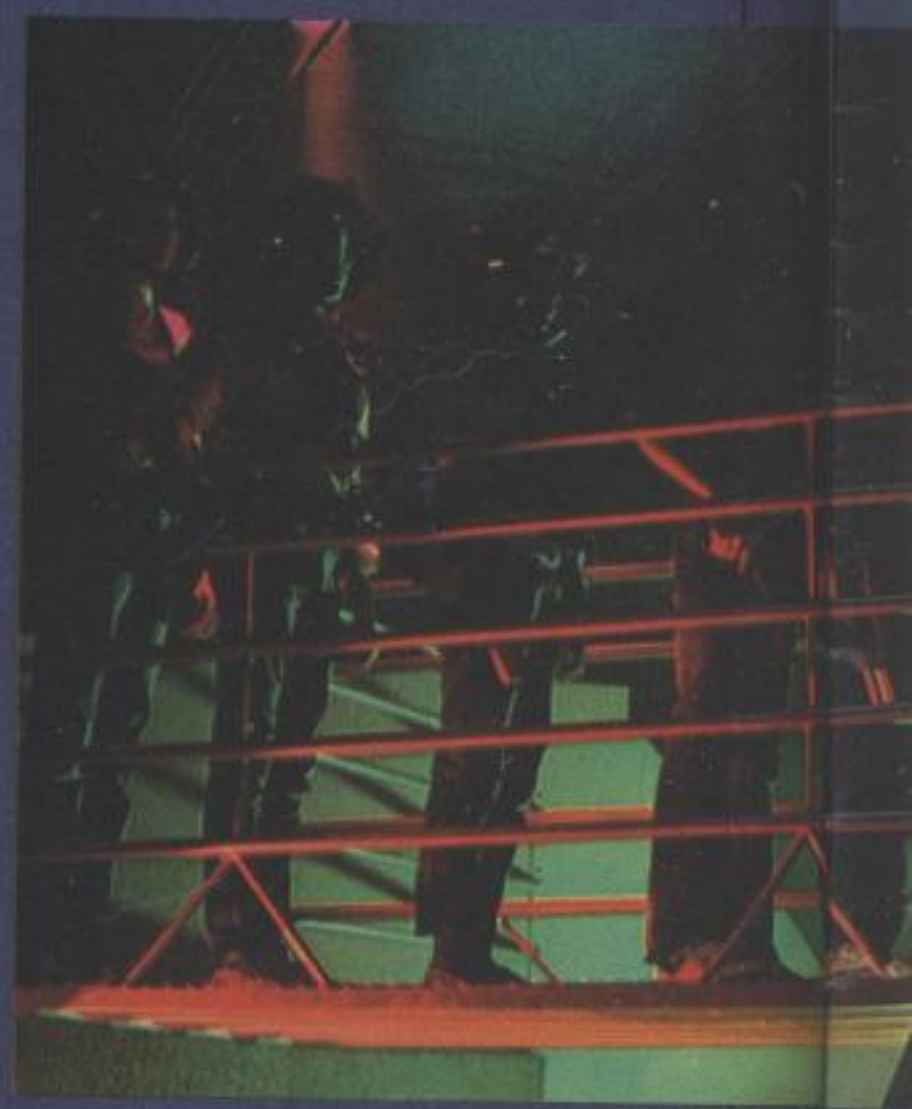
A Photon alien tower appears on both sides of the playing field. After an attack warning, each goes off once per game, disrupting all warriors caught in the open.

"The four computers we are using to orchestrate the electronics will also keep detailed, permanent records of everyone who plays the game, what his or her scores were, who the opponents were, how long the game ran – any data pertinent to choosing the best players in the country," Carter said.

At the end of each game, each player can receive a computer printout with his or her scores.

Carter is a graduate of the same Arizona high school attended by movie producer Steven Spielberg: Arcadia High School, near Phoenix. He left Arizona state university after nearly two years, to pursue a passion for tinkering that saw him building racing cars and racing boats as a teenager. He also invented a motorised surfboard and an offroad vehicle called the Snoopy in the 1960s.

Carter moved back to Phoenix and opened an amusement park where



you could gun up cars over a mile-long obstacle course. In 1981 he moved to Dallas and opened Chaparral Grand Prix.

When Carter decided to convert his concept of Photon into an electronics reality, he sought new knowledge and people.

"At first, I had a survival game in mind but soon realised that it had to take place indoors," he recalled. "After all, we are dealing with combinations of micros, radio frequency

equipment, light-sensing mechanisms, video-display electronics and experimental music that often pushes the state of the art."

He learned about electronics on his own. Then he found Jim Dooley, a Texan computer engineer and systems designer who "could do things never before achieved in the amusements field".

For over a year they assembled the hundreds of mechanical and electronics components to build a simulated alien planet environment which would resemble a "living video game".

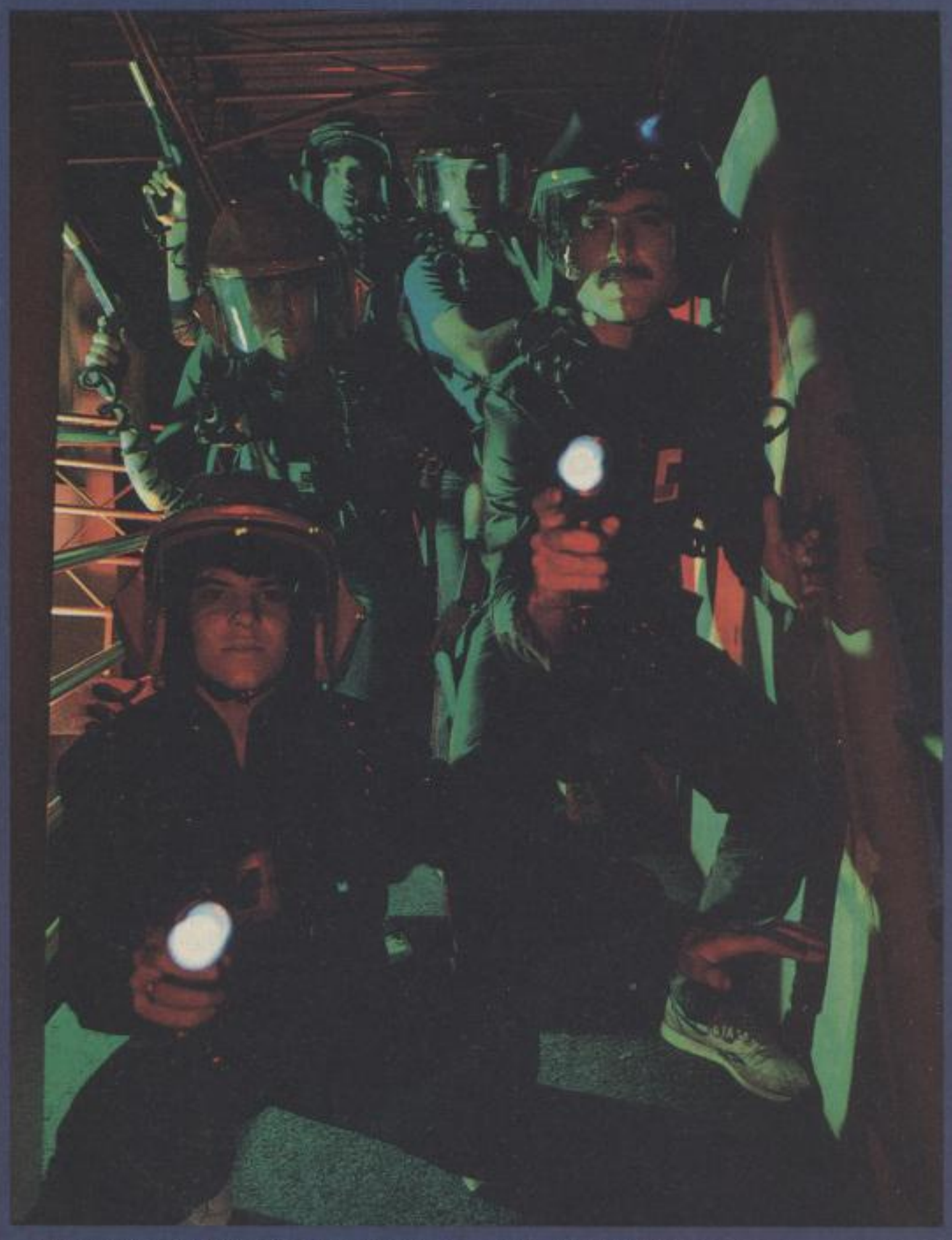
"The equipment isn't unique. But the way we put it together is," Carter said. "Things like the way the transmitters in the control module tell the computer, which it polls every few seconds, who has been stunned by a light beam. And the way the score is posted accurately and instantaneously for each player every thirty seconds by the computer on the video scoreboard. These working relationships are new."

When Carter and Dooley felt that everything worked together, they placed orders with fifteen manufacturers to produce the players' gear.

The typical Photon player is likely to be male, someone who enjoys video games and speed-and-skill oriented amusements, and who is competitive. Because of the weight of the equipment, players must be 4' 6" or taller. "We expected most of our players to be in their teens – but our studies turned up a surprising number of adults who said they would like to try it," Carter said happily.

"Until *Space Invaders* – the archetypical video game that emerged in 1979 – arcades were dominated by pinball machines, some Skee-Ball games, a baseball game or two and some rifle games. True, there was *Pong* – the Atari paddle game with its simple video display – in the mid-1970s. But it wasn't until we took the computer chip seriously that we permanently altered this business."

The pioneering *Space Invaders* enjoyed its dominance for less than two years. Then a new generation of faster, noisier, more challenging video games appeared. There was *Galaxian*, *Defender*, *Donkey Kong* and – most triumphant of all – the game with the insatiable little spring-jawed, obstacle-eating dervish: *Pac-Man*.



But not even *Pac-Man* could maintain a place for long in the imagination and loyalties of the heavily male, teenaged army of gamers. Three years after video game stores were sold out of *Pac-Man* cartridges at $39.95 each, *Pac-Man* was been given away as a 'tag-on' to home computers.

"The Achilles' heel of video games is that even less accomplished players will tire of repetition," Carter said. "Good players get bored even more quickly. It was inevitable that something like Photon should develop. When ten or twenty human brains spontaneously control the way the game unfolds, you get an essentially infinite variety of twists and turns."

Carter believes that Photon will usher in an era of living video games, just as *Space Invaders* triggered the video game explosion. But, because of cost, they will come more slowly.

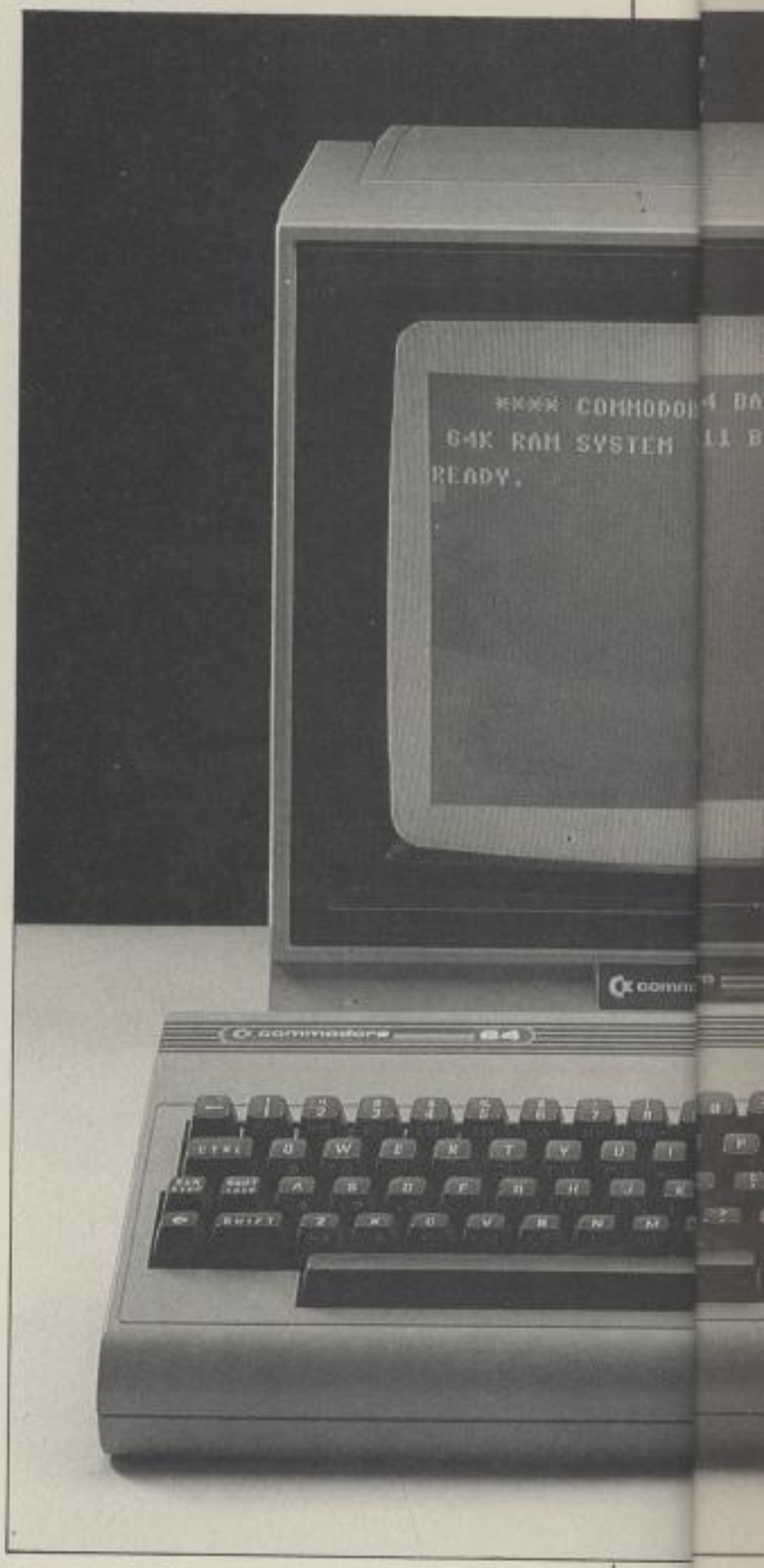
As many as 100 planet Photon centres should be open or under construction throughout the US and Canada by the end of 1984. They will be franchised to investors in 175 targeted geographic areas – cities of 200,000 or more population. They should come to Britain, with luck, in 1985.

The next major step in high-tech skills and strategy games will be the use of holography, Carter promised. These are laser-fuelled optical techniques that create the appearance of solid, three-dimensional objects in empty space – something like Automan in ITV's series of the same name.

Eat your heart out, Pac Man! □

EXCLUSIVE

SETTING A STANDARD



High-quality graphics and "the best sound chip in the business" have given the Commodore 64 sixty per cent of the micro market worldwide. Deirdre Boyd looks at the games system.

The Commodore 64 micro, its games and peripherals have been backed as best sellers in both Britain and America this Christmas. Launched only last year in the UK, 350,000 games systems were sold by the end of the year. Now it and the Spectrum vie for the top position in Britain.

Why is the C64 so popular? The most obvious reasons are the high-quality graphics and sound – essential ingredients for good games. It's also true that the keyboard and memory gave it a second life as business packages were developed for it.

For £190 you get a micro with 64K inbuilt memory, sixteen colours from the keyboard, high-resolution graphics, 3D effects, a music synthesiser, Z80 second processor option, and a large range of peripherals and interfaces.

Add to this the fact that software for the Commodore Pet and standard hardware for the Vic-20 will run on the C64, it is not surprising that there are Commodore product user groups, workshops and local user clubs around the country. And cartridges allow you to form a network.

The C64 can be used with either a monitor or a TV – and it has an internal VHF modulator. The 6510 CPU has extra input/output for those interested in programming. So the only cost that you must incur on top of the machine itself is the datassette. This costs £44.95 from the Commodore people; other makes include Datex at £34.95.

The purchase price also includes a manual, *The Programmer's Reference Guide*. This gives all the information you need for programming – but it assumes you have a working knowledge of Basic.

We would recommend you buy *Commodore 64 – getting the most from it*, written by Tim Onosko and published by Prentice-Hall. Costing £7.95, its 303 pages are clear and comprehensive.

A note here: the C64 runs in Simon Basic. So if you want to program, knowledge of machine code is an advantage.

The C64 can also be linked to Prestel and Micronet through a modem.

Commodore's own information service, Compunet, was scheduled to start in September. It is separate from Prestel, and its success will depend on how many people are persuaded to buy the £99.99 modem. Subscription to Compunet is free for the first year.

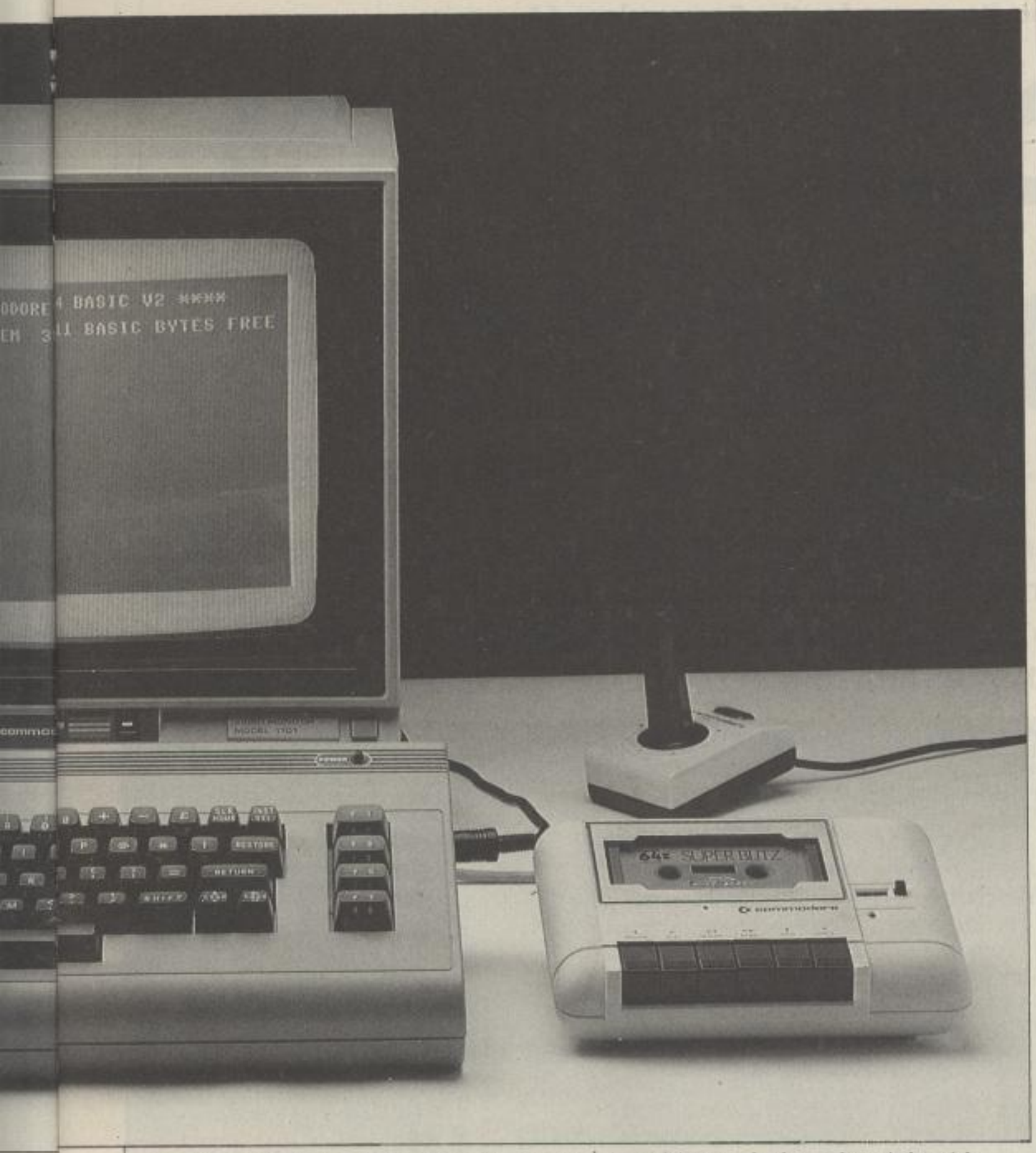
One facility on Compunet is that you can 'upload' programs. You pay a minimum charge of 5p per day, and the average is 1p per kilobyte or per page. But if anyone wants to download your program, you can charge them. So if you've created a good game, you might make a nice profit.

Externally, the C64 is a blend of pale and dark brown, the datassette cream and brown. Looking at the back and side of your machine, you will see the usual user port, cassette port, power connector and on/off switch. But there's more to the C64 than that.

You will also see an audio/video connector which can turn your micro into a sound generator, music synthesiser or hi-fi output.

There is a cartridge slot – so you can plug a cartridge game straight in without buying an interface.

There are also two ports for joysticks, paddles or lightpens. Commodore makes its own range of joy-



sticks, which are priced from about £10 for a Quickshot. The C64 can also take Atari-compatible joysticks, with prices starting from about £7.

Finally, there is a serial port for printer and/or disc drive. Printers sell for about £230 from Commodore; prices vary with other manufacturers. Disc drives sell on average for about £199.

As is usual, prices vary dramatically between the US and the UK. New York discount stores, for example, sell the micro for about $200. But software is cheaper here. Cassette games sell at $30 and over, and disc games at $35 and over – 90% of Commodore owners own a disc drive – in the US. Here, cassette games start from £1.99 and disc games from £14.95.

The C64 keyboard is like a typewriter. It has a QWERTY layout of sixty-two keys and four function keys. All sixty-two keys can be used for graphics. As well as upper and lower case letters, press the key with the Commodore logo and you'll get the graphic symbol shown on the left side of the key; press the SHIFT in the graphics mode and you'll get the graphic symbol on the right side.

Memory used by the games player goes up to 38K Ram. This can increase to 54K if the Basic interpreter is not used.

Screen display is bright and clear. There are forty columns by twenty-five lines with sixteen colours on a standard TV or monitor. Screen/border combinations add up to 255. So, too, do the displayable characters, including 124 graphics.

If you are into programming, there are up to eight user-definable sprites, each with a maximum of eight colours. Each also has its own screen priority for 3D effects. There is an auto-collision detection system between sprites and other screen objects. And it is bit-mapped in 320 x 200 pixels (a pixel is the smallest possible screen shape). Vertical and horizontal scrolling can be used in both normal and hi-res modes.

If you need the cursor, you'll find its home in the top left-hand corner of the screen.

The sound comes from a special chip called SID – for sound interactive device. SID has been called "the best sound chip in the business". With it, you can vary the sound so that it simulates musical instruments.

SID has three "voices" which can be played separately, in unison or in harmony. Each voice has nine octaves.

Gamers who are also into creating music have got a double treat in the C64. There are four waveforms: sawtooth, triangle, variable, and pulse and noise. There is also a programmable attack/decay/systain/release generator, and a programmable filter. There is, of course, a master volume control.

The C64 also carries a white-noise generator which produces sound and percussion effects. For quality reproduction, you can connect your hi-fi to the micro.

The only complaints I have with the C64 are minor. The first is loading – the C64 is definitely user hostile here. First, you usually see only a white screen while this is happening. Secondly, loading can take up to fifteen minutes. So, if you have a loading problem, you could spend half an hour on two tries alone.

Some software houses are trying to solve these problems. Turbo-load and Pavloda-load games can load in two minutes or so. And some games from US Gold show flashing colours when loading, à la Spectrum.

To sum up, you can't lose if you buy the C64. It's the best 64K games micro at the price – but competition is close. The Amstrad CPC 464, for instance, also has a 64K memory. And for £329 you get a colour monitor and datassette with it; for £229 you get the black and white monitor and datassette thrown in. There are more games around for the C64 – the choice between these two excellent systems may lie in whether you have to fight your family to use the TV as a monitor.

With the C64's advantages, its players can become very fussy.

Luckily, software houses are fuelling that fussiness. Many of the most popular old favourites are being converted onto the system – with added scenes or graphics. *Zaxxon* (see pages 41 to 43) is one. Newer games, like *Jet Set Willy* and *Valhalla*, have also been converted for the C64. And an almost incredible 100 screens form others: *Montezuma's Revenge* (TVG, September), for example.

Because people are so confident of the C64's success, it has been well supported by both peripheral makers and software houses. You'll be spoiled for choice.

There are too many games for the C64 to list them all here. Instead, we've chosen our favourite games and listed the software houses in case you want more information or have trouble finding your favourite game. Just turn over the page.

Favourite games for the Commodore 64

Everybody wants something different from a game. But some stand out as giving outstanding gameplay to almost everyone. These are TVG's personal favourites.

Evil Dead by Palace Software (TVG, July). Based on the film of the same name, this tells the story of naive teenagers trapped in an isolated cabin by spirits of the undead. The game shows the floor plan of the cabin and its inhabitants from above. The game scrolls simply over four main sections – but it's far more addictive than a first impression might indicate. We haven't tired of it yet.

Fire Ant by Mogul (TVG, July). You are an ant who must rescue your queen from the scorpions who have invaded your chambers. Eight screens must be conquered, while you fight off ants and collect treasures. Very addictive with good sound and graphics.

Gyruss by Parker. This is a sci-fi shoot 'em up true to the arcade version, with possibly the best musical soundtrack to date. It features very fast action through seven screens as you fight your way to Earth.

Heathrow Air Traffic Control by Hewson Consultants TVG, September). This flight simulation gives thirty minutes in the life of a traffic controller in Heathrow airport, surrounded by four 'holding' areas of twenty aircraft. The many variable include aircraft types, speeds and headings to differing altitudes, windspeed, airspace restrictions and outgoing aircraft.

Jet Set Willy by Software Projects (TVG, July). Having made his fortune in *Manic Miner*, Willy succumbs to the high life. But his mansion contains sixty screens of horror. He must pass through all these screens before midnight.

Montezuma's Revenge by Parker (TVG, September). Ninety-nine screens of perils as Panama Joe struggles through an Aztec tomb collecting treasures and avoiding spiders, skulls, snakes and lava pits.

Valhalla by Legend (TVG, August). This is a must for adventure freaks. It's more advanced than *The Hobbit* in that every move you make is shown onscreen. Your task is to recover Odin's golden helmet – to do this you must complete three lesser tasks.

WHO CREATES COMMODORE GAMES?

If you have any trouble getting hold of your favourite games in the shops, write to or telephone the manufacturers. We've compiled a list of their names, addresses and telephone numbers – they'll be happy to help you.

Abbex Electronics
17 Elgin Avenue,
London W9
Tel: 01-289 2377

Activision
184-186 Regent Street,
London W1
Tel: 01-486 5669/8714

Alligata
1 Orange Street,
Sheffield S1 4DW
Tel: 0742-755796

Anirog
8 High Street, Horley,
Surrey
Tel: 02934-6083

Artic
Main Street,
Brandesburton,
Driffield YO25 8RG
Tel: 0401-43553

Bubble Bus
87 High Street, Tonbridge,
Kent TN9 1RX
Tel: 0732-355962

Bug-Byte
Mulberry House, Canning
Place, Liverpool L1 8JB
Tel: 051-709 7071

Commodore
675 Ajax Avenue, Slough,
Berks SL1 4BG
Tel: 0753-79292

Cosmi *(see US Gold)*

Datasoft *(see US Gold)*

DK'tronics
Shire Hill Industrial Estate,
Saffron Walden,
Essex CB11 3AQ
Tel: 0799-26350

Games Machine
Business & Technology
Centre, 40 Fretherne Road,
Welwyn Garden City
Tel: 96-28444

Hewson Consultants
56b Milton Trading Estate,
Milton,
Abingdon OX14 4RX
Tel: 0235-832939

Interceptor
Lindon House, The Green,
Tadley, Hants
Tel: 07356-71145

Level 9
229 Hughendon Road,
High Wycombe,
Bucks HP13 5PG
Tel: 0494-26871

Livewire
198 Dean's Gate,
Manchester M3 3NE
Tel: 061-834 4233

Llamasoft
49 Mount Pleasant, Tadley,
Hants RG26 6BN
Tel: 07356-4478

Martech
Martech House, Bay
Terrace, Pevensey Bay,
East Sussex BN24 6EE
Tel: 0323-768456

Melbourne House
Castle Yard House,
Castle Yard, Richmond,
Surrey TW1D 6TF
Tel: 01-940 6064

Microdeal
41 Truro Road, St Austell,
Cornwall PL25 5JE
Tel: 0726-3456

Mr Micro
69 Partington Lane,
Swinton,
Manchester M27 3AL
Tel: 061-728 2282

Micro Power
Northwood House, North
Street, Leeds LS7 2AA
Tel: 0532-458800

Microprose *(see US Gold)*

Mirrorsoft
The Mirror Group of
Companies, Holborn
Circus, London EC1P 1DQ
Tel: 01-822 3082

J. Morrison
2 Glensdale Street,
Leeds LS9 9JJ
Tel: 0532-480987

Ocean
6 Central Street,
Manchester M2 5NS
Tel: 061-832 6633

Phoenix
Spangles House, 116
Marsh Road, Pinner, Middx
Tel: 01-868 3353

Puffin Personal Computer Collection
536 King's Road, London
SW10 0UH
Tel: 01-351 2393 x213

Quicksilva
Palmerston Park House,
13 Palmerston Road,
Southampton SO11 111
Tel: 0703-20169

Richard Shepherd
Elm House, 23/25 Elmshott
Lane, Cippenham, Slough,
Berks
Tel: 06286-63531

Richard Wilcox
Station Road,
Walsall WS7 0J2
Tel: 05433-2728

Severn Software
15 High Street, Lydney,
Gloucester GL15 5DP
Tel: 0594-43352

Softek
12/13 Henrietta Street,
London WC2
Tel: 01-240 1422

Software Projects
Allerton Road, Woolton,
Liverpool L25 7SF
Tel: 051-428 7990

Software 64 *(see US Gold)*

Solar
77 West Drive, Bury, Lancs
Tel: 061-761 1770

Talent
University of Strathclyde,
Glasgow G4 0BR
Tel: 041-552 4400 x3318

Taskset
13 High Street, Ridlington,
Yorks YO16 4PR
Tel: 0262-73798

Terminal
Derby House, Derby Street,
Bury BL9 0NW
Tel: 061-761 4321

US Gold/Centresoft
Centresoft House, Tipton
Trading Estate, Bloomfield
Road, Tipton, West
Midlands
Tel: 021-520 7591

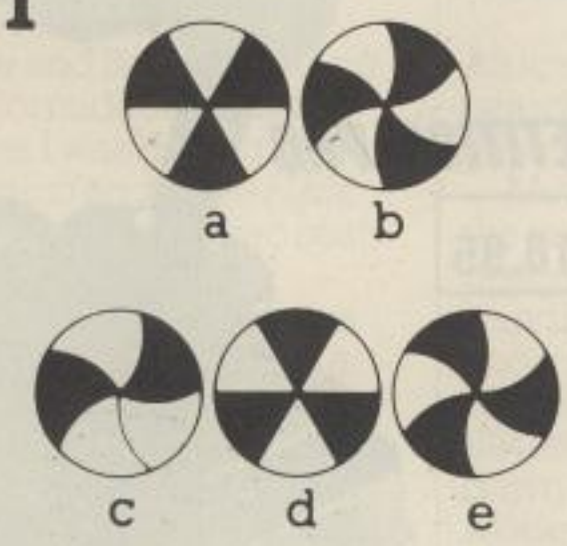
Virgin Games
61-63 Portobello Road,
London W11 3DD
Tel: 01-221 7535

Voyager
Wirral Business Centre, Unit
31, Gorse Lane, Dock
Road, Birkenhead,
Merseyside
Tel: 051-639 7899

Put yourself to the test

Try this mini I.Q. test to find out if you are eligible for membership of Mensa, the high I.Q. society. Four out of these five questions right and you will probably qualify. Which is the odd one out in each of these five questions? Answers are upside down at the base of this advertisement.

1



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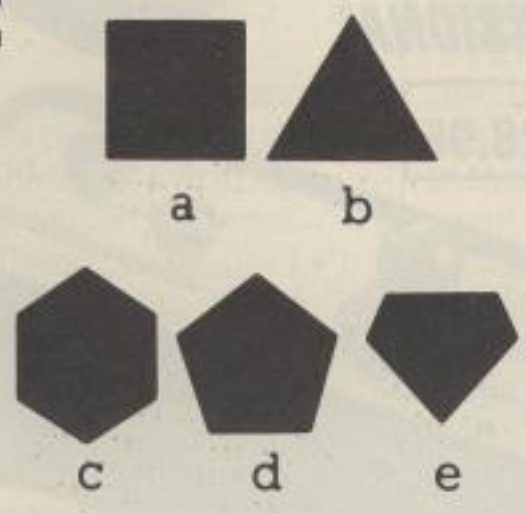

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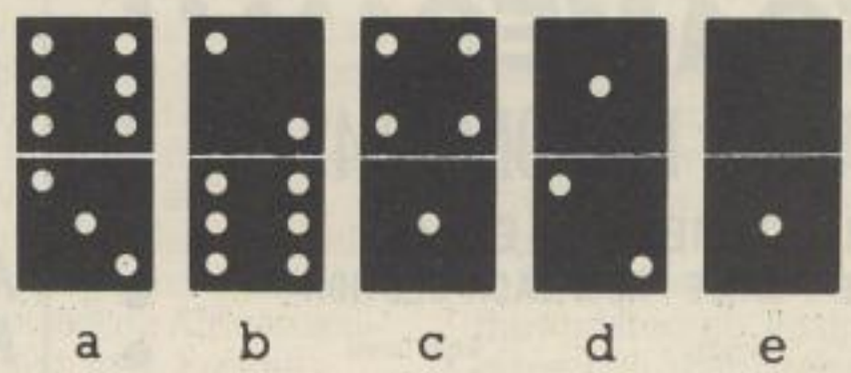

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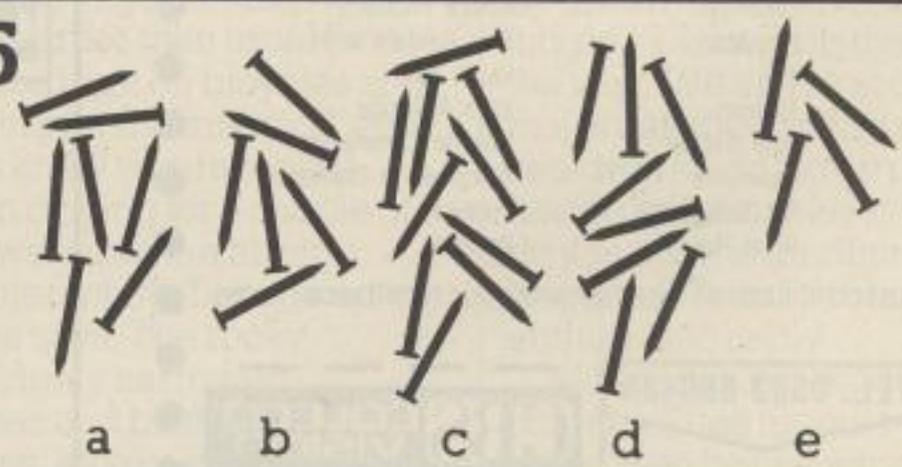

Please send me details about Mensa and a copy of your self administered test.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

TVG

To learn more about Mensa and how to take the Mensa entrance tests, return the coupon to Mensa, Freepost, Wolverhampton WV2 1BR (no stamp required).

1.c 2.e 3.e 4.b 5.a

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D·A·V·E R·A·V·E·S·!

In this month's chat column, pioneering Dave Harvey unconsciously relaxes at the arcades. He soon finds himself persuaded to travel to Africa, where he is beset by heat and cannibals.

Morning, Dave fans – or afternoon, Dave fans, as the case may be.

A perfectly normal day at the arcade, with me and Reggie feeding two bob bits to formidable arcade machines. Just as I was getting past the boulder section on *Jungle Hunt*, Reggie spoke. "I booked us two seats on the next flight to Africa."

Moi loses all notion of life and has to rush over to a nearby bench for a long lie down.

I feel hearty prods to the back: Reggie. "I'm not joking. We leave tomorrow," he says, as though it was as simple as booking a visit to the dentist. Moi gets up, activates brain cell and has to do a bit of thinking (take cover).

Runs out of arcade and goes home, with Reggie tailing behind. Rings up *TV Gamer* and tells them I won't be around for, say, a couple of weeks. As soon as I end message, loads of whooping noises emit in the background, followed by hip-hip hoorays and something about a party. Puts down phone and Reggie comes in door. Tries picking phone up for reverse effects but, alas, no luck.

Packs suitcase, helps Reggie pack suitcase, gets bits and pieces together and then gets ready for the big day.

But why did Reggie want to go to Africa? "To search for Jon Dean," came the reply.

For any of you who don't know who Jon Dean is, moi will tell all. Until the middle of 1983, there used to be someone at the customer relations department at Atari called Jon Dean. To cut a long story short, one day I rang up and asked to speak to Mr Dean. I was told he had been sent to Africa. I hasten to add that we haven't heard anything from him since. Thus the reason for the journey.

Moi rushes over to Reggie's house the next morning. Reaches destination, and finds Reggie standing on doorstep. No, I don't know why he was standing on a lump of bread. We get in cab, go to airport, get on plane, moi has bit of a lie down. Reggie listens to my Dépèche Mode tapes. We arrive at destination, get out of plane, visit all the necessary places and then, for the first time, set foot on African soil.

After a few days' stay, Reggie decides it's time to go hunting. We got up a little earlier than usual (one in the afternoon), got on bicycles and went searching for the missing Dean. Neither of us knew where to start.

We'd been cycling for a couple of hours when we came to a turning. "This looks interesting. Let's go up here," Reggie says. The rocky pathway suddenly narrowed. Immense trees and bushes surrounded us. Monkeys (Reggie's favourite animal) swung from tree to tree. There were v. weird animal noises all over the show – a jungle. "Let's turn back," moi says with a wary expression on face. Reggie would have none of it.

As we cycled a little further, moi senses being watched. And just as I was about to have a rest, a dart skimmed past Reggie's head. Suddenly, a whole cluster of wobbly natives, holding long spears, executing odd walks, war paint on face and wearing grisly grass skirts pop out from behind tree. Moi needs bit of a lie down, but doesn't feel that this is the time.

Wobbly natives throw spears at me and Reggie. Luckily they miss. We were cycling as fast as we could when, about a 100 yards down the road, another set of grisly natives put in an appearance and started running towards me and Reggie shouting some native chant at the top of their voices. We were stuck. There was a set behind and a set in front.

They promptly form ring around me and Reggie, again talk a load of gibberish, then grab me and Reggie by the arms and take us down the jungle – picking up the odd snake on the way. We arrive at destination and moi is horrified to find rather large cauldron standing on pile of twigs having quiet smoke to itself. "What do you think is for dinner?" I say to Reggie. "We are," is his less than enthusiastic reply.

Moi says quiet prayer to self and contemplates menu: reviewer and chips, Reg bourguignon, writer of wisdom and wit pie, loony bin dessert (that one's Reggie's, by the way).

Native comes over to moi, and moi tries to persuade him out of it by giving him free tips on how to play *Ghost Encounters*. He wouldn't listen. Puts ladder up against pot (isn't that thoughtful?) and orders Reggie to climb in – followed by yours truly.

This would make a good write-up for Darrin, I thought as I reached the last step. Just as I jumped in, do you know what happened? I fell off the bench, chums. □

WIN A COMM

The prize in our competition this month is one of the most popular computers in the world, a Commodore 64, complete with datassette for cassette games and a couple of joysticks.

It's all ready to start playing!

But if you want to win one of these beauties, you're going to have to work for it, right? We want it to go to a good home with someone who can use it properly. So we will expect you to know something about computers in general, and the CBM 64 in particular, to win.

SOUND

1 *How many "voices"?*

2 *How many octaves does each cover?*

3 *Who or what is SID?*

4 *Can you connect a CBM 64 to a hi-fi system?*

GRAPHICS

5 *How many sprites?*

6 *What's the maximum number of colours in a single sprite?*

7 *How many built-in graphic shapes?*

8 *How many colours of text can you have on the screen at the same time?*

9 *How many different characters or symbols can you obtain using the 'G' key?*

10 *There's a special key to send the cursor home. Where is "home"?*

Tie breaker: *Assume that you have a Commodore 64, cassette recorder and a pair of joysticks. What would you say is the most useful accessory for a games player to buy, assuming price is no object, and why? (Complete in not more than 30 words on a separate sheet of paper, and attach to the Entry Form opposite.)*

MODORE 64

ENTRY FORM

Name _____

Address _____

_____

My answers to the questions opposite are as follows:

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

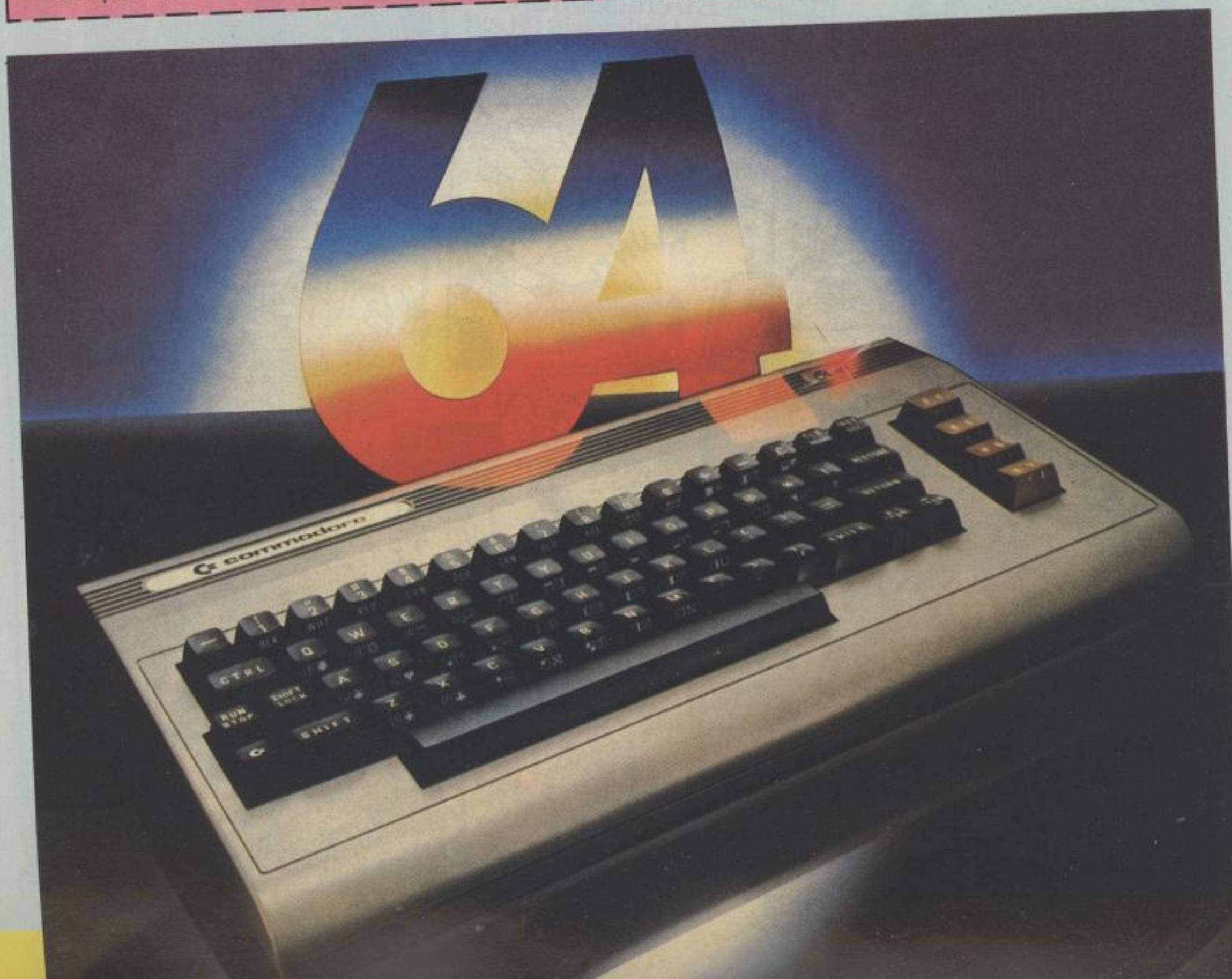
4 Yes/No 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____

8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

Please complete, attach your tie-breaker, and post to:
Competitions, TV Gamer, 187 Oxford Street, London W1R 1AJ

Competition Rules

1 All entries received by the closing date, 26th October, will be examined, and correct entries will be judged by representatives of both *TV Gamer* and Commodore.
2 The prize will be awarded to the entrant who correctly answers all the questions and, in the event of a tie, to the entrant who, in the opinion of the judges, writes the most interesting and appropriate reason for owning the accessory of their choice.
3 The prizewinner will be notified by post, and details will be published in a forthcoming issue of *TV Gamer*.
4 All entries must be made on forms cut from *TV Gamer*. Photocopies are not acceptable.
5 The prize is to British TV standards, and operation or servicing cannot be guaranteed overseas.
6 The editor's decision is final.



HEROES INC.

By Tim Quinn and Dicky Howett

The GAME so far- The whole of the EARTH has been turned into the ULTIMATE GAME PROGRAM. PACMEN, SPACE INVADERS, FROGGERS, DEMONS, DRAGONS and ARTHUR SCARGILL are running amok in a determined effort to wipe out MANKIND and win the game!

Meanwhile, the HEROES make battle plans at the TURK'S HEAD...

I TELL YOU, AL, THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SOLVE THIS PROBLEM, AND THAT'S IN BATTLE!

AND I SAY YOU'REALL WRONG!

YEAH! BUT THERE ARE MORE OF US!

W-WELL, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU FEEL ABOUT IT, I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO DO AS YOU SAY!

MY ROUND, BARMAN...

I BET JET SET WILLY NEVER HAD THIS PROBLEM!

At that moment in Camden Town, 12 year old ELVIC SNAILRIC is about to play his latest cartridge...

OH BOY! 'PRINCE ANDREW V S THE FEMALE RACE'. HERE WE GO!

KLUNK!

ZAP! DOWN GO ANOTHER TWO HUNDRED 'PAGE THREE' GIRLS!

MUNCHY!

JASPIN HOUSE

ZX MANIC EASY

PHEW! ENDGAME. WHAT A BATTLE! THE POOR GIRLS DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE....HE DEVASTATED THE WHOLE....

...GALAXY?!!

CRUNCH!

BUT THE TIDE IS TURNING.... HERE COMES THE NUNS OF ST. YAR..!

ER.. IS THAT MR ATARI? CAN YOU TELL ME HOW TO RE-PROGRAM MY HOUSE?...

Naturally, the POLITICIANS aren't standing still! Questions are asked in the HOUSE....

ZZZZ

WHO PINCHED THE TOILET PAPER FROM THE MEMBERS' LOO?

AND at closing time, the HEROES prepare for confrontation..

THE TURK'S HEAD

SALOON

IT'S NOT... HIC... THE DRAGONS I CAN'T STAND.... HIC.. IT'S...

URGH!

CRUNK!

...THE DUNGEONS.. AWK!

SO..

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

HERE WE ARE, LADS. IT'S TIME TO FIGHT BACK! LUCKILY THE WAR MUSEUM'S HAVING A CLEARANCE ON THESE W.W.1. STICKY BOMBS!

JUST TAKE OFF THE OUTER CASING, AND YOU HAVE EXACTLY 5 SECONDS TO HURL IT AT THE ENEMY, TO WHOM IT WILL STICK UNTIL DETONATION.

GLOP!

TAKE AIM....

.. AND THROW... OH!

AHEM! THESE STICKY BOMBS SURE ARE STICKY!

CHUCKLE!

AND WE HAVE ABOUT 5 SECONDS!

SNIGGER

NEXT: ENTER SELINA SCOTT!

DAVE HOWETT '84

BUCK ROGERS

PLANET OF ZOOM

Darrin Williamson shoots his way through the eleven screens of the first Adam "supergame".

SPECIFICATION

Name: Buck Rogers Planet of Zoom

Supplier: CBS Electronics

Price: comes with machine

Machine: Adam

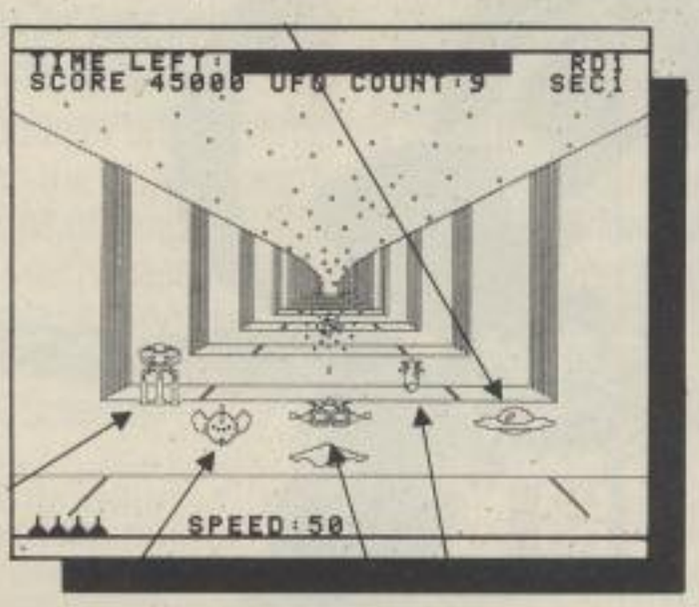
Rating: Value 4
Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 4
Arcade 3.5

This game is the first of the "supergames" for the Adam computer. Coming free with your Adam, the game is a good foretaste of things to come. It is based on a reasonably successful coin-op by Sega which was launched into the arcades back in 1982.

It's a little tricky to work out what the link is between this game and the original Buck Rogers. None of the hardware featured in the game appears in either the Buster Crabbe serials of the 1930s or the 1979 film and TV series. Despite this, the game is one of the best sci-fi shoot 'em ups to come from the arcades of 1982.

Buck Rogers: Planet of Zoom is a multi-screen shoot out between Buck Rogers and an unnamed alien force. Your ultimate objective is to knock out the alien command ship, which is the source of a constant stream of enemy planes. But – of course – it's not quite that simple (never is!). There are nine screens to get through before you get the chance to take out the big one.

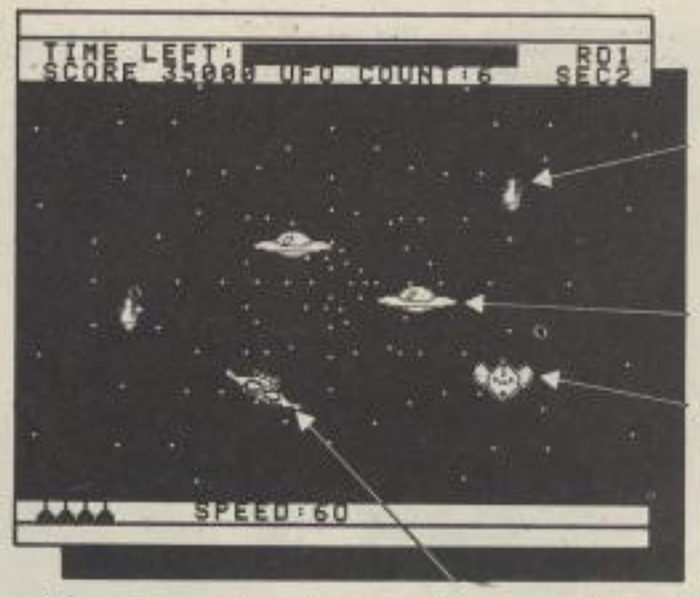
Arcade veterans will notice that there are more screens in this version than in the arcade game. This is probably the first time this has happened. The thing that makes *Buck Rogers* such a good game is that each screen needs a different attack plan, so I'll go through each screen separately.



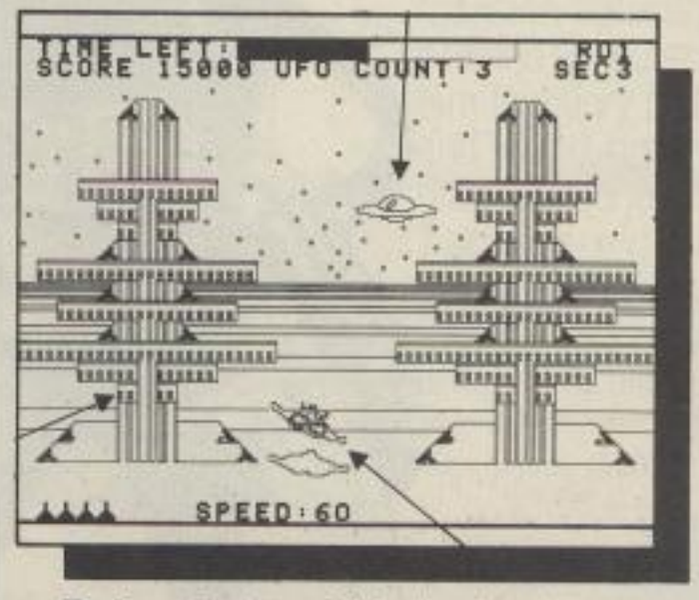
Trench one. The first scene looks like something out of another well known sci-fi film of recent years. But the baddies you have to "bump heads" with are fairly unique to the *Planet of Zoom* scenario.

First, you are confronted with flying saucers that look rather like fried eggs (due mainly to their colouring). These must be dealt with by flying low to the extreme left or the extreme right.

Having shot a quantity of those, you have your first encounter with the bouncing tripeds. These are disposed of by staying low and firing rapidly. It's important to stay at top speed on this screen, otherwise saucers have a nasty habit of backing into you.

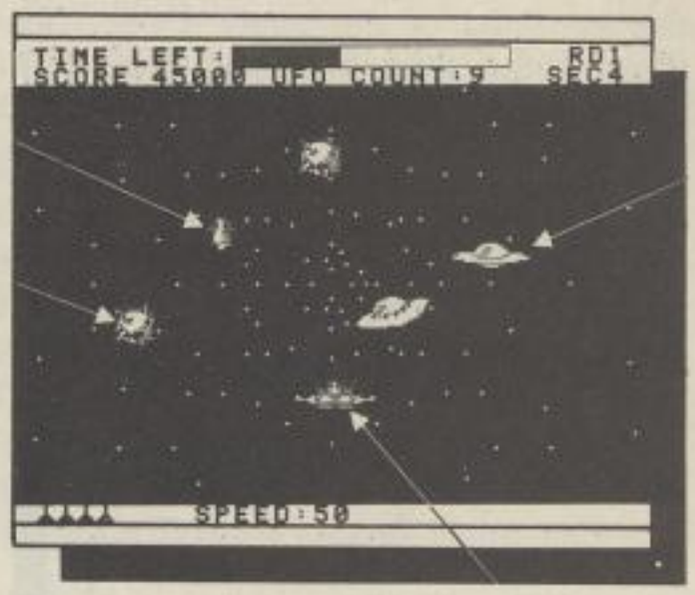


Saucer shoot up. Now you're in deep space with rows of saucers to shoot. These stream from one of three corners. For some reason, they never come from the top left-hand corner. There are three spots on the screen which allow you to wipe out entire rows of saucers by just keeping your finger on the fire button. Again maximum speed should be maintained.

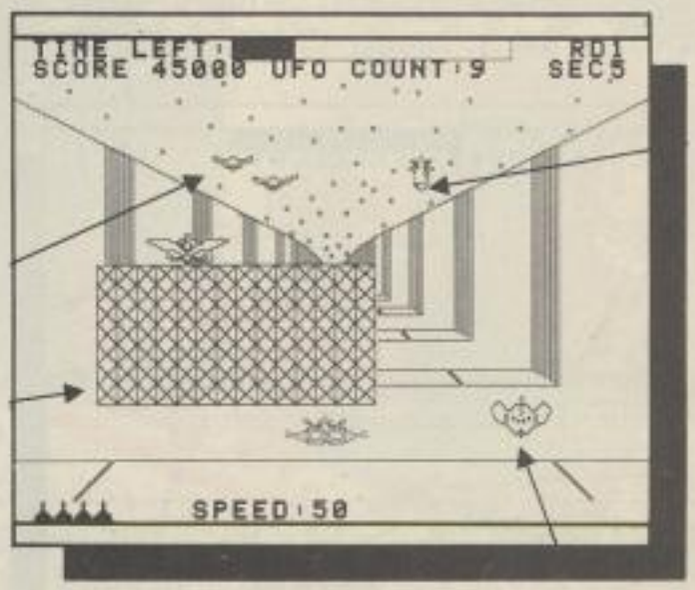


Pylon flying. This is the first time you see the surface of the planet. To make sure it's not the last, you have to fly between large silver pylons as well as customarily shooting down the saucers, which is relatively easy on this round as there are only two set patterns.

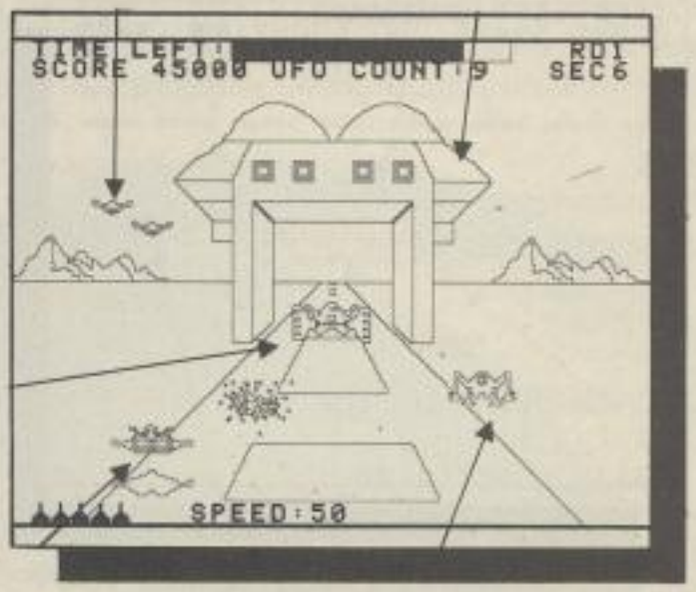
The trick here is to fly low and move as little as possible. Most people's downfall on this screen is that they panic and move too far in one direction. This results in our hero getting a closer look at one of the pylons than is good for his health. Once again, hold maximum speed.



Space Mines. Buck's decided that the portion of planet surface he's just covered is a little rough, so he's back in space again. But this sector has been covered in space mines, as well as being inhabited by the saucers. This scene may sound tricky, but it is one of the easier ones as you have complete freedom of the screen. The only thing you have to be careful about is sitting on a mine or ship below you.



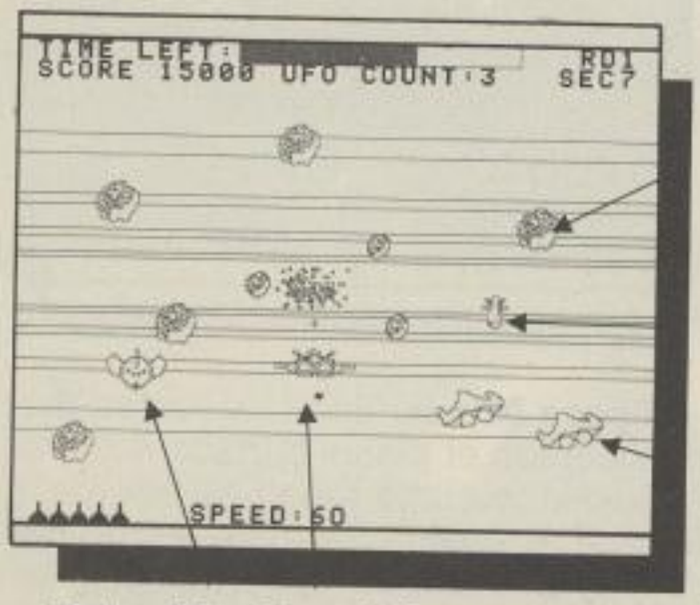
Trench two. The trench makes a return trip for the second and last time – but is far more deadly this time round. Walls have been added for you to avoid and the enemy planes make their first appearance (although what planes are doing in deep space I'll never know). Tricky but is possible at maximum speed.



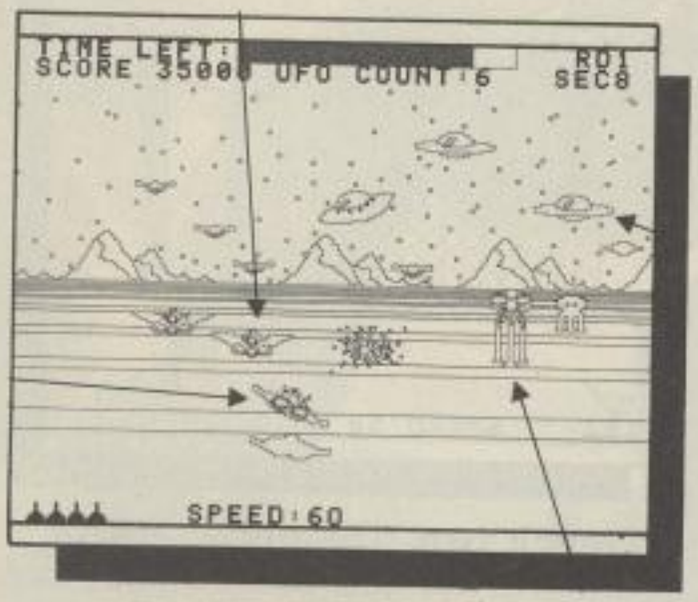
Groundwalkers. This screen doesn't appear in the arcade game so I'd better explain what's going on. Buck's ship is skimming across a road blasting away at oncoming battletanks and spider-like groundwalkers.

Every so often you will meet a bridge. For safety's sake, stay inside

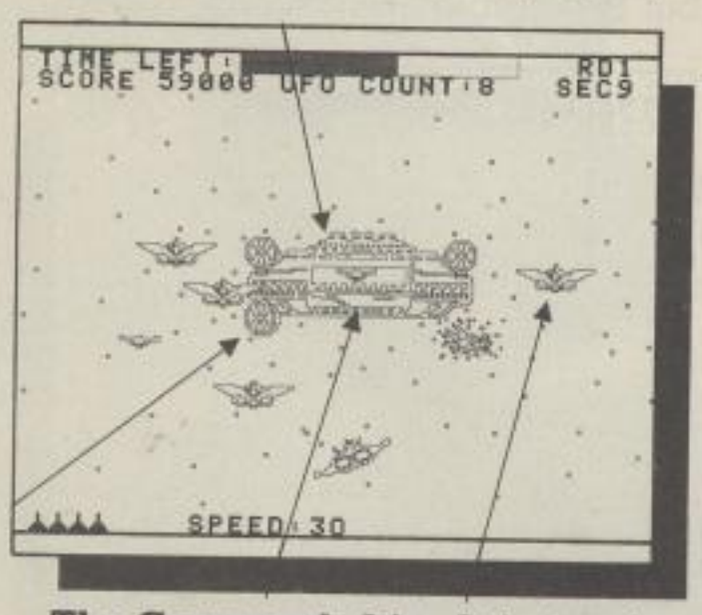
the confines of the road. Deal with these in the same way you dealt with the tripeds in screen one. Don't pay too much attention to the planes in this screen.



Asteroids. Yes, folks, we're back in space again. This time you're up against different fighters and indestructable asteroids. Go to the exact centre of the screen and keep firing. If you're correctly positioned, you'll be able to pick off all the nasties the instant they appear without fear of being just so much asteroid covering.

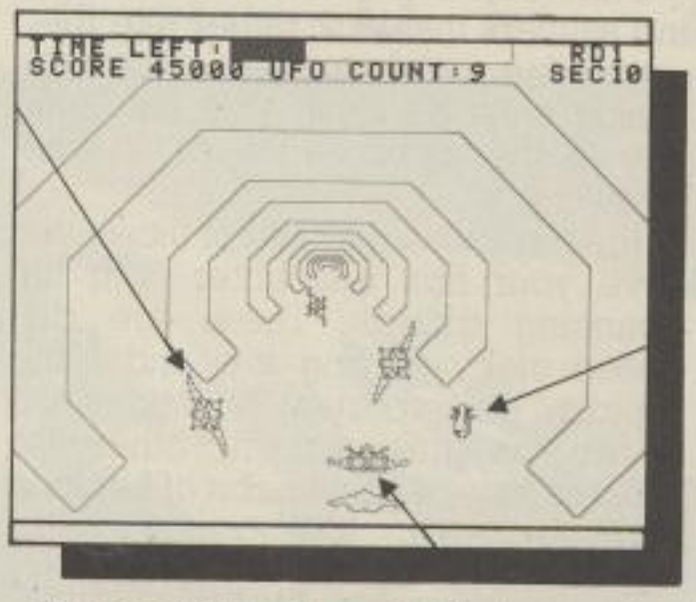


Zoom surface. The barren surface of Zoom is now the battleground for just about all the nasties that you met so far on your travels. There's no real pattern to this screen except to say that you score more by staying high.

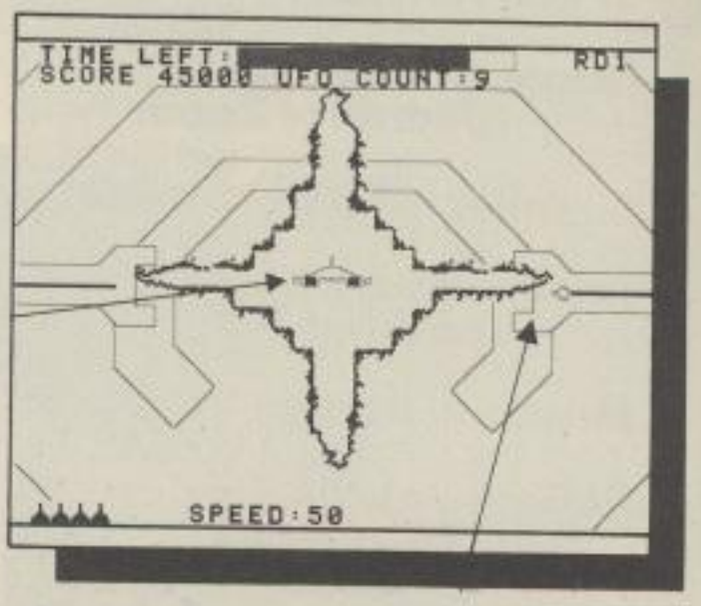


The Command ship. At last you've reached your goal: the command ship which is currently spewing out planes. Destroying it isn't too difficult. First you must knock out all four engines, then blast away at the gates in the centre of the ship. It'll look like you've blown up, but it's the enemy that's copped it.

A bug lies at the end of this screen if you dispense with the big baddy very quickly. The screen will go blue for a few seconds while the next scene is loading up.



Space warp Tunnel. You're on the home straight now. All that is between you and home is a stream of drones spinning towards you. This scene is also new and exclusive to the Adam version of the game. A nice bit of music accompanies this particular scene.



Docking sequence. Time for a breather whilst your ship docks and is prepared for the next round. This features the same elements as the first, a bit faster. But don't worry. All the tips I have given you apply to this and all the other rounds. All you require is faster reflexes. □

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Caught in a time-warp, Charlie is trapped in a sealed warehouse. Avoiding the robots and ferocious guards he builds a time door to escape to the next warehouse. 2 screens, 16 increasingly difficult levels. Sound and smooth machine-code graphics.

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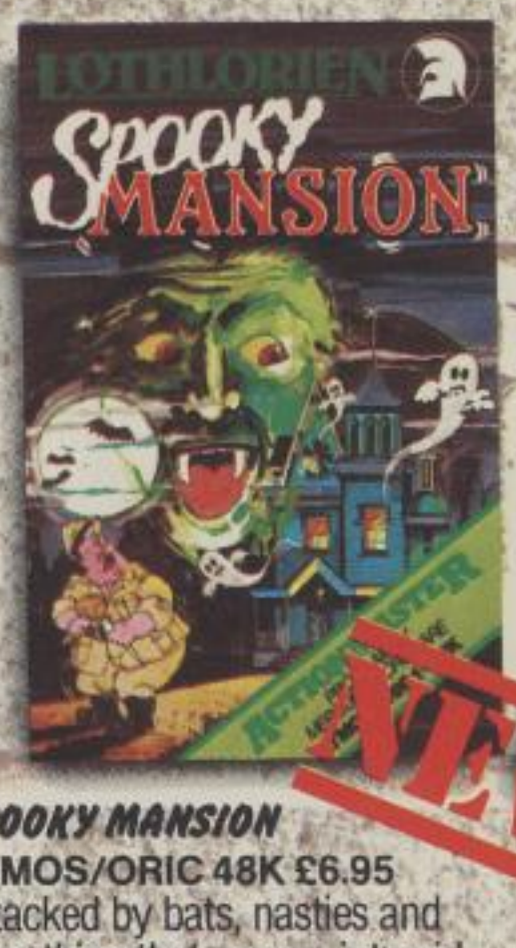

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ATMOS/ORIC 48K £6.95
Attacked by bats, nasties and everything that moves, intrepid explorer Hugo First fights his way through the spooky mansion collecting weapons, wakens Dracula and condemns him to a fiery hell. Great effects and sound, good machine-code graphics. 10 levels. 3 Lives. 7 screens.

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Monsters in the mineworkings try to stop you taking your gold to the Bank. Clear the screen and they re-emerge with new recruits (up to 60!) and the game speeds up. 4 lives. Great sound and graphics.

A GAME TO GET YOUR TEETH INTO!

REALM OF THE UNDEAD
SPECTRUM £5.95
Can you fight off the vampires to reach the subterranean dungeons of Dracula's Castle, where you release the villagers and Dracula, who must be lured to his coffin for the final chill? 3 screens.

HYPERBLASTER
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You are commanding a prototype spacecraft on a test flight when you are attacked by an Alien force. Dare you test your Hyperblast and plunge into Hyperspace? Fast action. 100% machine-code. 15 screens. Keyboard manoeuverability.

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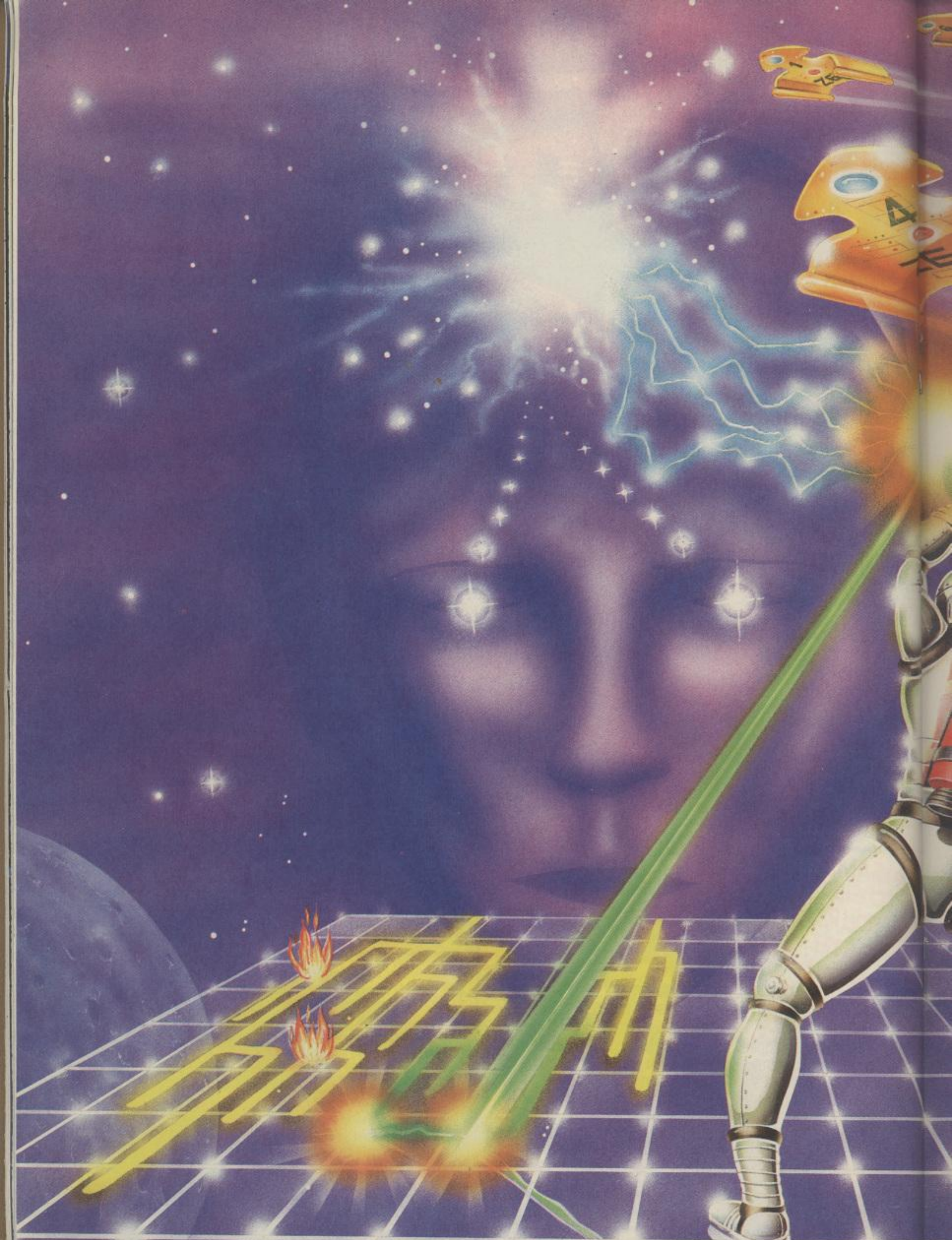
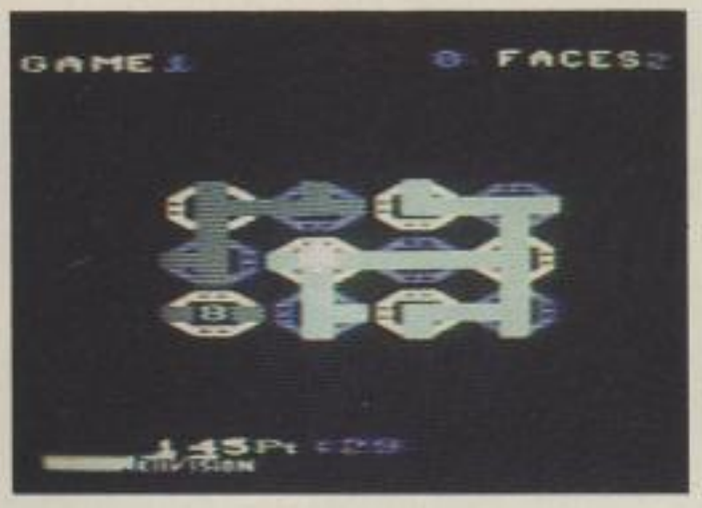


ZENJI

Zenji is a strategy and puzzle game heading Activision's new generation of games. Deirdre Boyd gets through the first screens.

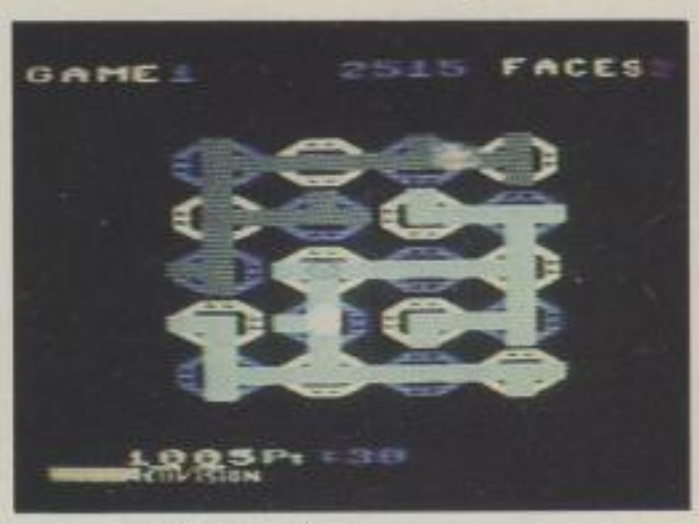
Created by Matthew Hubbard, the object of *Zenji* is deceptively simple. You must join a maze of "elements" to the central source. The result is a unified green image, or zenji.

The goal is simple, but the game grows increasingly harder. The



maze grows larger each time you successfully join it. The two deadly "flames of desire" start to emit fatal illusions. And you have only thirty seconds to finish each maze.

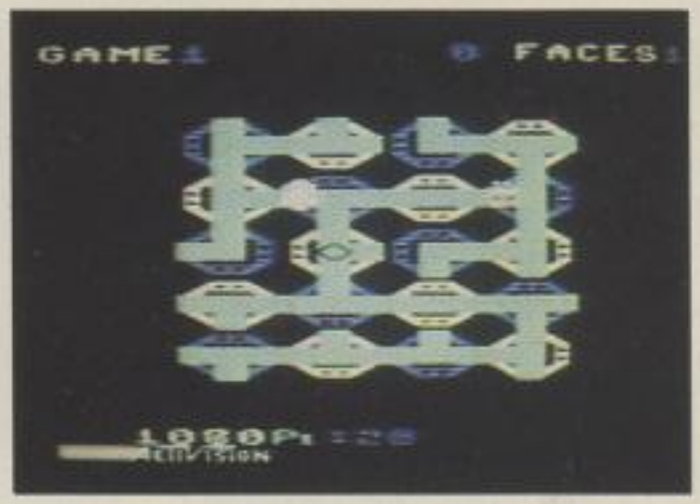
There are four levels for one player, and four for two players. You start with five lives, and gain another



every 10,000 points.

At the start of each maze, you will see one octagon with the figure nine. Reach it quickly before it counts down to zero. You'll score a bonus of 100 times the figure showing on the octagon when you reach it.

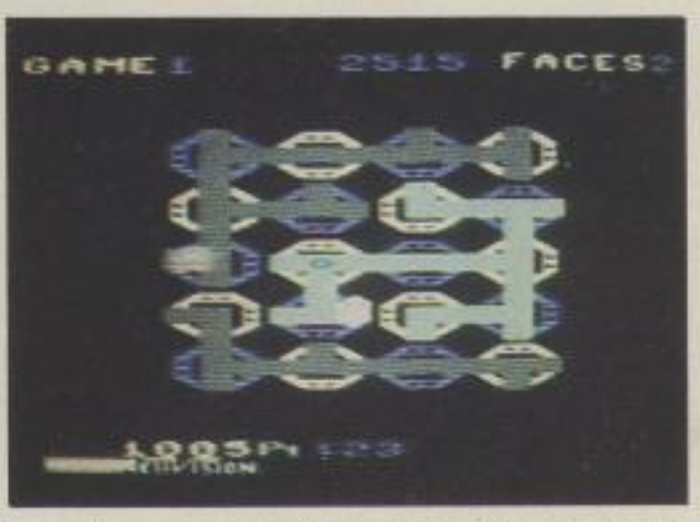
The top left screen shows the opening maze, with 800 bonus points to be collected. The screen beside it shows the second level, when the



maze has been joined into a glowing green zenji.

The centre left screen shows the third level. Look at the octagon second from the left and bottom in the remaining screens. Spinning the element around it gives the differing joins. You must decide the best position to eventually join the whole maze.

Zenji costs £9.99, and runs on the Commodore 64.



PHOTOGRAPHS: PHILIP DE-ASHA

Now we've whetted your appetite, here's something to get your teeth into.

Printer Technical Specifications

Printer/ Plotting system	Ball Point Pen, 4 colour
Plotting speed: (horizontal) (vertical)	52 mm/sec (2.05ips) 73 mm/sec (3.08ips)
Printer Speed	12 characters per second
Resolution	0.2 mm/step (0.00787 inch)
Effective plotting range	96 mm (3.804 inch) x axis, divided into 480 steps. (No limit in y direction)
Characters per line	80 or 40 text mode (determined by software in graphics mode)
Characters per line	INT (480/n+1) *6) for 0=n=15
Accuracy (repetition) (movement) (distance)	0.2 mm max 0.3 mm max 0.5% max (x–axis) 1% (y–axis)
Pen life	250 metres (825 feet)
Parallel interface	8–bit parallel Uses STROBE and ACKNOWLEDGE
Temperature range storage	18.3 to 35°C (65 to 96°F) –40 to 71°C (.40 to 160°F)
Humidity range	10% to 80% relative non-condensing
Power supply	Switching power supply input 100–120 VAC 200–240 VAC
Dimensions	10¾" wide 6⅞" deep 2½" high

Atmos Technical Specifications

CPU	6502 A
Memory	Choice of 16K or 48K RAM
Memory (48K Model)	Minimum 48K RAM, max 64: 16K ROM external control signals allow use of full 64K RAM or maybe used externally to increase ROM/RAM
Language	Extended Microsoft basic
Keyboard	Typewriter style and pitch, 57 keys, standard computer layout, additional cursor control keys, autorepeat facility, tactile and acoustic feedback
Display	Output for B&W or colour TV, RGB output for colour monitor.
Text format	40 line x 28 rows
Character set	Similar to Teletext format, standard ASCII double height, flashing, 80 user definable characters
Graphics	240 x 200, 8 colours
Graphic Facilities	Points, lines, circles
Sound	Internal loudspeaker and amplifier. 3-Channel sound synthesiser envelope control, amplitude control 8 octaves, noise channel
Storage	Most cassette recorders via DIN socket 300 or 2400 BAUD. Disc Drive.
Interface	Centronics, expansion port, Hi-fi, RGB Monitor, UHF TV, cassette recorder
Other	Warm reset to regain control without clearing program or data

Micro Disc Technical Specifications

Formatted Capacity	160K bytes per side (double density as standard)
No. of Tracks	40 (80 available as option at a future date)
No. of Sectors	16
Bytes per Sector	256
Transfer Rate	250K Bits/Sec

Supports up to 599 files per side, four drives single or double sided, 40 or 80 track. User definable configuration allows mixing of drive types including 5 ¼" (five and a quarter inch)
Extensive wild card facilities
Copy allows merging of basic and machine code files

Utilities

The Utilities are as follows:

1. Backup	Copy a whole disc
2. Copy	Copy a file to another
3. Del	Delete a file allowing wildcards
4. Dir	Display directory listing
5. Drv	Set the default drive number
6. Format	Format and initialise a disc
7. Load	Load a file (code data or basic)
8. Protect	Change protect status of file
9. Recall	Recall a basic array from a file
10. Ren	Rename a file
11. Save	Save a file (code, data or basic)
12. Store	Store a basic array as a data file
13. Sys	Change system configuration

Prices and data correct at time of going to press.
Specifications on the above models may change without notice.

Available at Allders, Currys, Dixons, Greens, Harrods, Laskys, Rumbelows, Spectrum and Zappo Computer Centres.

THE AVIATOR

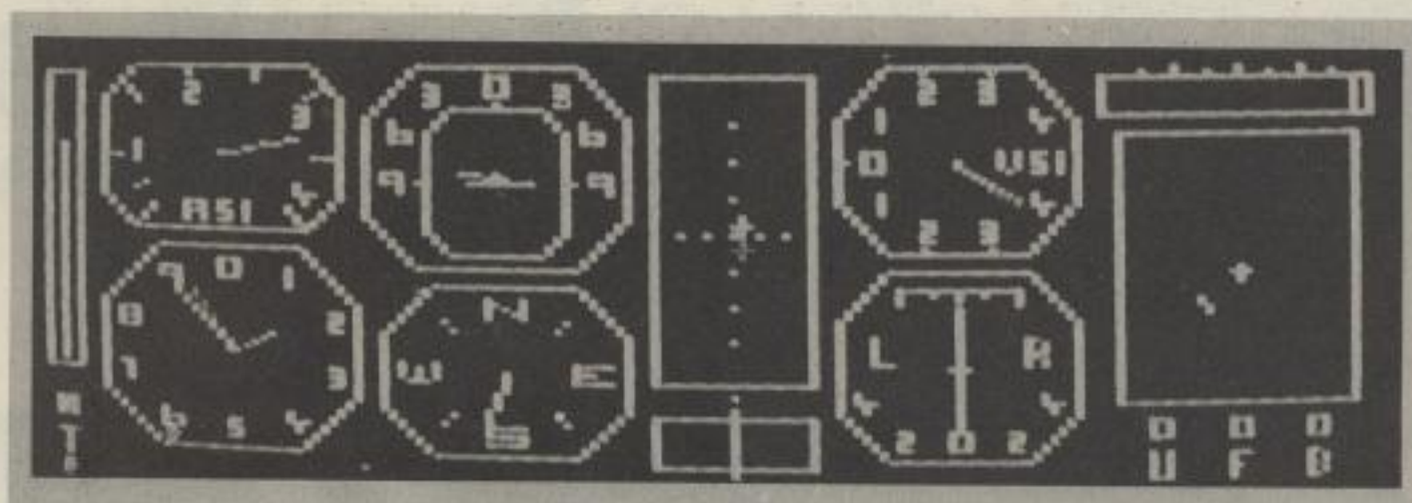
One man's flight to save his home town!

Aviator lures alien-zapper Ian Boffin into the world of flight simulators.

After a quiet spell, Acornsoft came up with the winning game needed to stay at the top of the BBC software league. That game is *Aviator*.

Apparently, writer Geoffrey J Crommond spent nine months perfecting the game. *Aviator* could be seen by the unknowing as "just another flight stimulator". But to those who have played it, it is an experience of flying. Once you budding pilots have grasped the basic rudiments, the aviator's world is yours to roam.

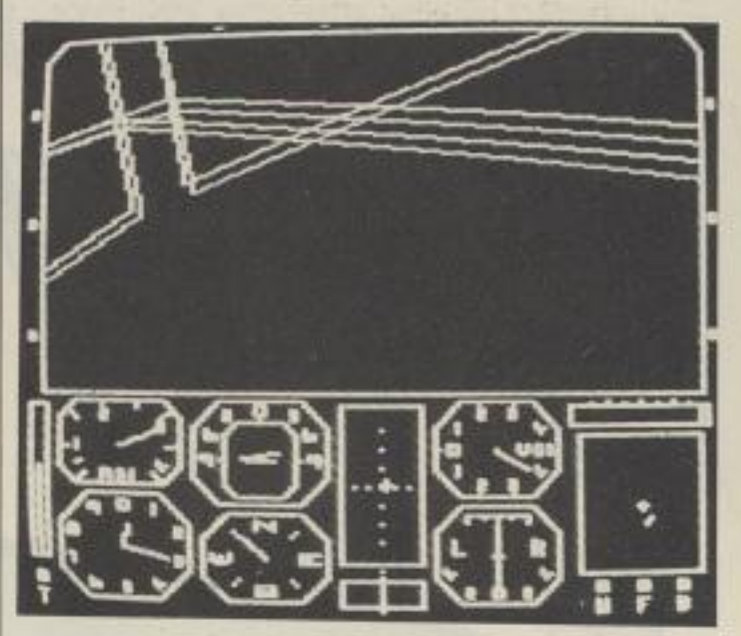
To begin with, you need an ex-



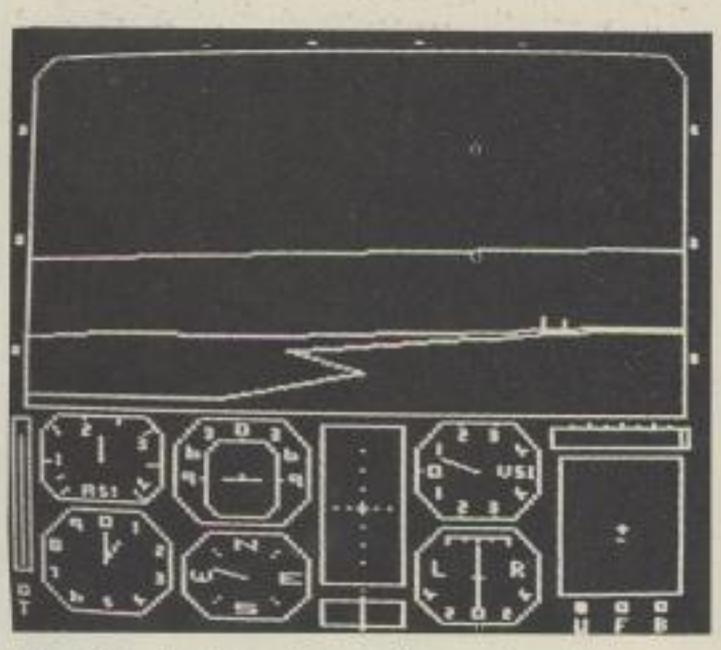
The wide array of flight instruments looks stunning – but confusing – at first. Basically, if you read from right to left, you will see the following.

Fuel gauge: goes down as you fly around. Refuelled by bombing.
Air speed indicator: tells you how fast (in knots, mph) you are going.
Altimeter: tells you your height in 100s and 1000s of feet.
Artificial horizon: tells you whether you are upside down, right way up or indifferent (nothing personal).
Compass: no prizes for guessing what this does.
Joystick position: shows what would be happening to the joystick.
Rudder position: little used, but shows how your rudder deviates to the left and right.
Vertical speed indicator: otherwise known as the VSI, registers note of climb or descent in 1000 ft per minute.
Slip and turn indicator: sounds good – but I haven't used it yet.
Throttle setting: moves from left to right, the more power exerted.
Radar: Who gave a Mark II Spitfire a radar? Who cares? It is easily the most useful thing on the dashboard.

Below the radar are three lights going left to right. There are, respectively, undercarriage up/down, flaps up/down, and brakes on/off.



The view approaching the bridge from the lake side.



The lake before the turning to the river and the bridge.

planation of the controls. Playing the game with the keyboard is a bad move – hands are usually tied in knots by the end of it. A joystick is far more practical and stylish for the budding pilot.

The joystick works the ailerons and elevators (nothing to do with lifts), but not the rudder.

All the other things such as throttle, gun sights, ignition, flaps, and undercarriage are listed in the useful operating manual. No pirates allowed in here!

The fun of playing *Aviator* comes with the tests of skill in the three-dimensional world. Before this, take off is necessary. Nothing could be simpler – or is it? It's more complicated than it sounds.

To take off, it is useful to have a lot of runway. Then turn on the engine, put up the throttle to a fairly high level, and release brakes. When the air-speed indicator reads about 125 miles per hour, slowly pull back on the stick.

The art of flying is quickly found – but landing is another matter. First, you must slow down, which appears to take hours. Using throttle and elevators, get into a straight approach path to the runway.

After you are flying below 150 mph the flaps may be lowered to give extra height and speed.

As you come to the runway, pull up and try to float over it. Careful use of throttle is needed to avoid a nose-dive into the tarmac (ouch!).

By now the undercarriage should be down and you should be a few feet over the ground. Then beep, pulling back (the joysticks, please!) while you pull the throttle. Try to beep it at one or two feet above the ground and wait for it to stall the last foot or so. Then apply the brakes and steer, using the rudder, into position for the next take off.

To do the tests of skill, both Acornsville and the bridge must first be located. For this the map is next to useless. . . .

To see the excitement of Acornsville and the bridge, fly exactly west to a point where you fly over the lake. From there follow the river to the bridge.

To fly under it you must be low and flying at a constant altitude. Going under the bridge, push into a shallow dive. Then, just before you are under it, start pulling out and climb. Not content with that, you can try it upside down!

Flying through Acornsville is far harder. To attempt it, you must be familiar with low-level flight and landing. It is the ultimate in nastiness, because you must fly below the height of the lowest building (EEEK!).

To find Acornsville, fly over the lake and turn due south. It appears from between two hills. To score the 100 points for this manoeuvre, you must fly below the lowest building. The best method is to land and taxi through the streets. For really talented pilots, this is a thrill.

General tips start with being careful with the joystick – it is not an arcade machine. Use small movements or you'll end in a spin. Be conscious of speed: it's nasty to stall. Learn to judge distances and speeds, cut back on throttle in the air, and don't try anything a Spitfire could not do.

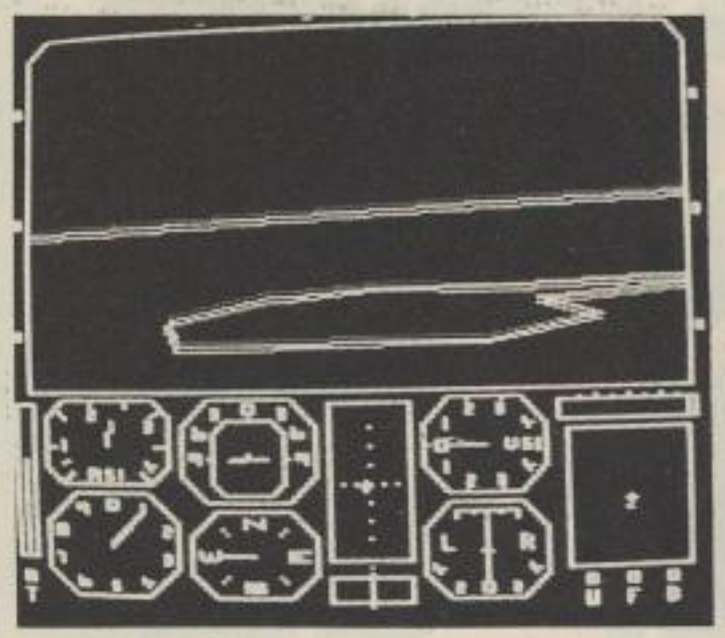
You may think that's all there is to *Aviator*. But no! In true space invaders style, aliens descend to kill the people of Acornsville. This is affectionately known as the Theme.

The aliens of the Theme are triangular, often with bits attached to their extremities. I am told this means they are feeding. Whatever form they are in, death is the best thing for them.

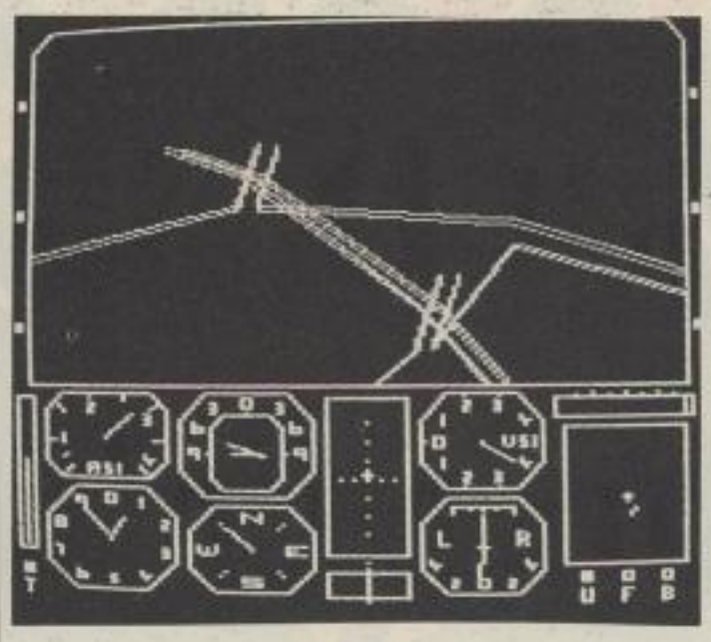
When alien hunting, search around the fields of Acornsville, pick off a few, come back to refuel, and

SPECIFICATION

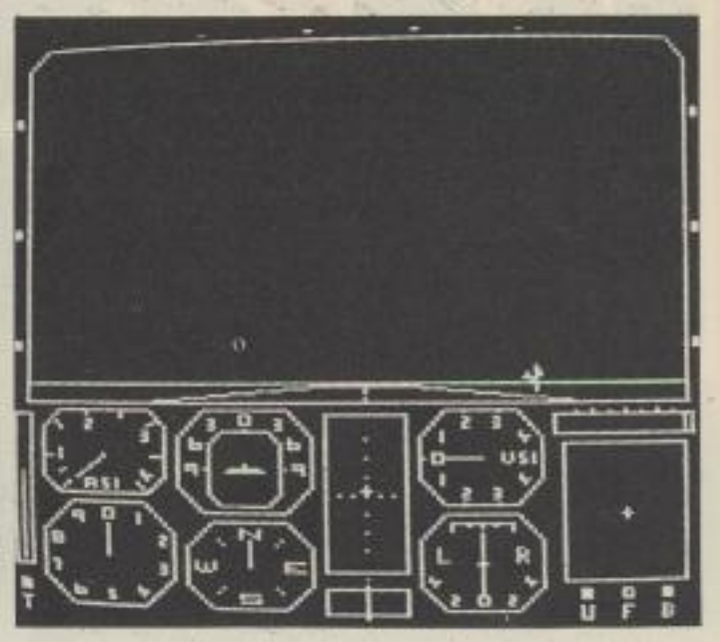
Name: Aviator
Supplier: Acornsoft
Price: £14.99
Machine: BBC 'B'
Rating: Value 4
Graphic 4
Sound 2
Gameplay 4



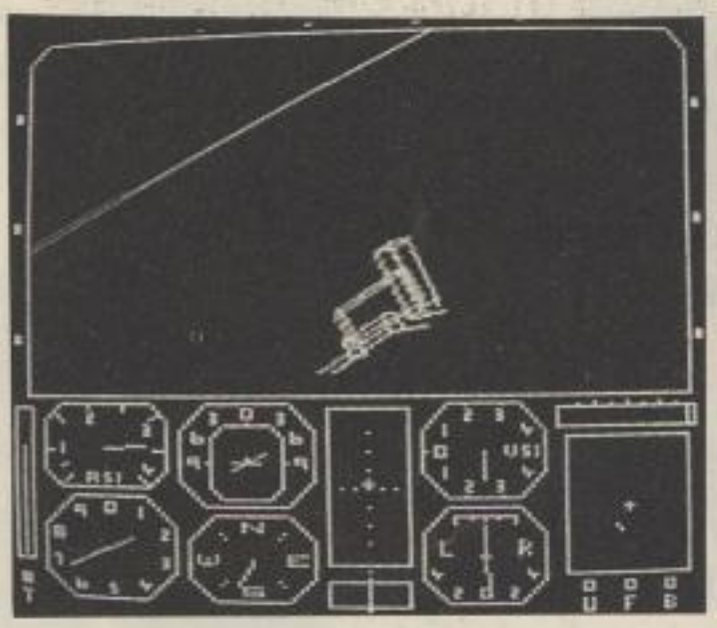
This is a very steep approach to the bridge. Watch out!



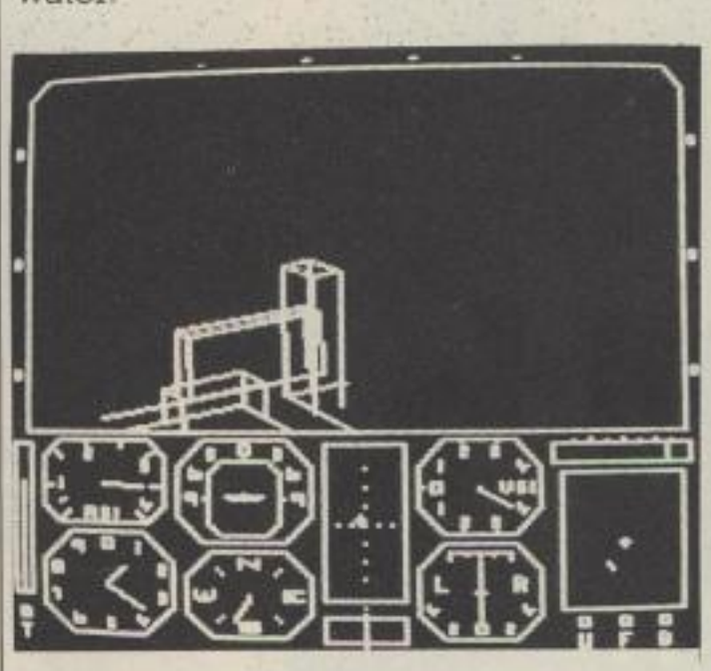
Better pull out in time, before you hit the water!



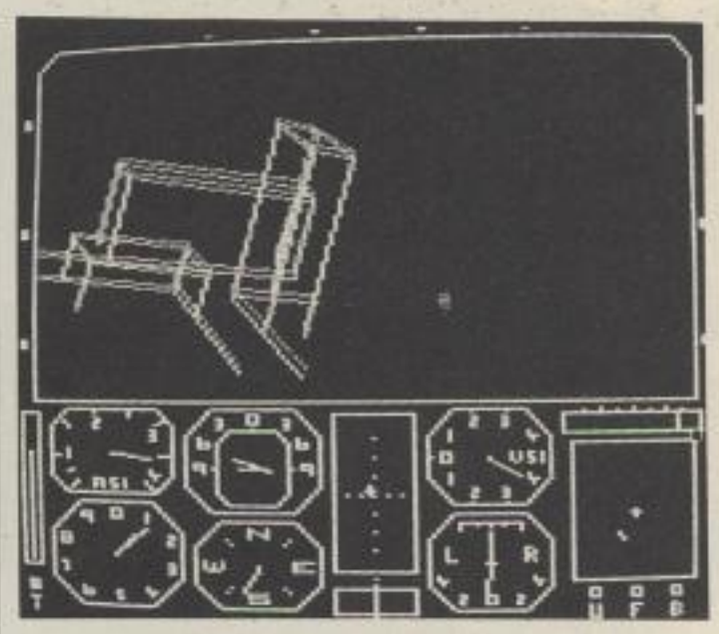
The Spitfire is at your command and ready for takeoff.



Acornsville lies dead ahead. Then you'll be taxiing through the streets.



A low pass over the houses. Don't try anything a Spitfire couldn't do.



Flying towards a collision with a tower block!

start the defence of your home town. Also, try not to get too close. Shock waves from explosions send you spinning out of control. I then felt strangely ill – like seasickness.

Even if you don't like the idea of a flight simulator, the space games should keep you satisfied.

One final note: if you are an aggressive arcade player like me, this is worth looking at. It has changed my outlook towards flight simulators – any game with that much influence must be worth playing. Scramble with the rest of Acorn Squadron. . . □

TEST FLIGHT WITH THE BEST
Flight simulators for the BBC, Commodore, Electron, MSX and Oric/Atmos

Fancy flying a Boeing 737 jet? If so, *737 Flight Simulator* by Salamander Software is for you. It was written by a professional pilot – and it shows. The detailed manual accompanying the game includes a flying lesson.

As with *Aviator*, screen shots are in black and white. This emulates night conditions, when only the runway lighting is visible to the pilot from the flight deck.

The layout of the instruments is the usual one for a 737. To the left are the "blind" flying instruments, in the centre are fuel and power gauges, and on the right are the two navigational displays. Your instruments include:

- compass
- air speed indicator
- artificial horizon
- altimeter
- warning lights
- power indicator
- gear position indicator
- flap indicator
- distance to navigational beacon
- beacon indicator
- bearing to beacon
- navigational receivers
- outer marker beacon indicator
- fuel gauge
- stop watch
- vertical speed indicator
- mach no
- instrument landing system.

Not surprisingly, you'll find that twenty-seven keys are needed to control your jet's actions.

You start on the runway, taking off into low cloud. You can see the extended runway centre line, beacon conditions, and the jet's track over the ground, as affected by true air-speed and wind velocity. This is how a radar controller would see them in reality.

Ten miles before touchdown, your jet descends through the clouds, guided by the radio navigational aids. This is the most difficult part of the whole game.

After landing – or crashing – you can restart in five ways: present or new position, takeoff or landing positions, or reload with a new layout. If you take the last option, you can set up your own airfield and atmospheric conditions.

737 Flight Simulator is available on the BBC and Electron. Versions for the Oric/Atmos and new MSX micros will be out before Christmas. All cost £9.95.

Heathrow Air Traffic Control presents another view of flying: that of the traffic controller.

This game was reviewed in the September issue of TVG, so I'll give a brief outline only.

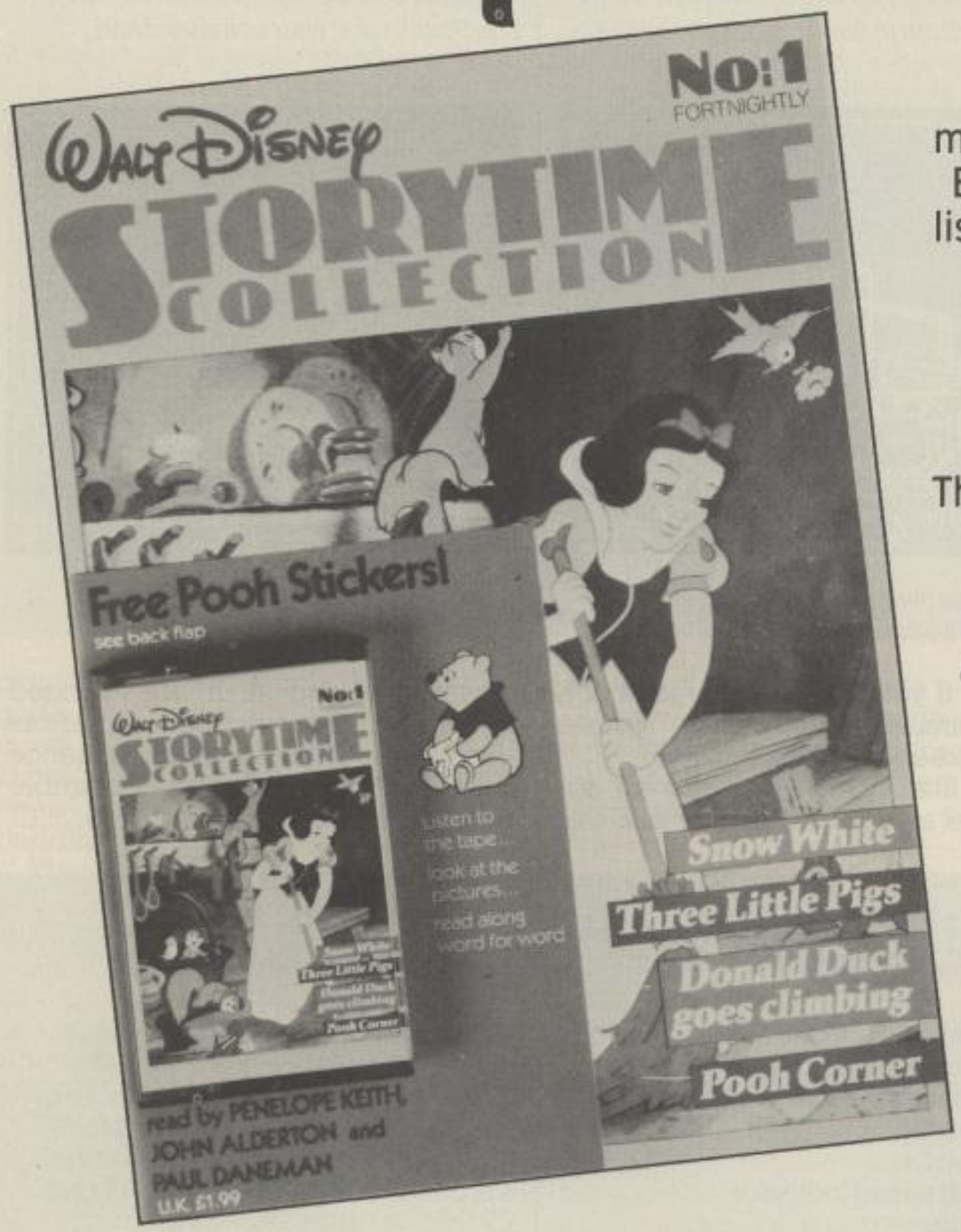
The graphics show a radar screen, with London's Heathrow airport in the centre. It is surrounded by four 'holding areas' in which up to twenty planes circle.

The variables include aircraft types, speeds and headings to differing altitudes, windspeed, airspace restrictions and outgoing aircraft. There are seven difficulty levels for you to try.

Heathrow Air Traffic Control is by Hewson Consultants, and sells at £7.95. It runs on the Commodore 64.

Coming soon! Coming soon! Coming soon! Coming soon!

Walt Disney Storytime Collection



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Listen to the tape... look at the pictures... read along word for word

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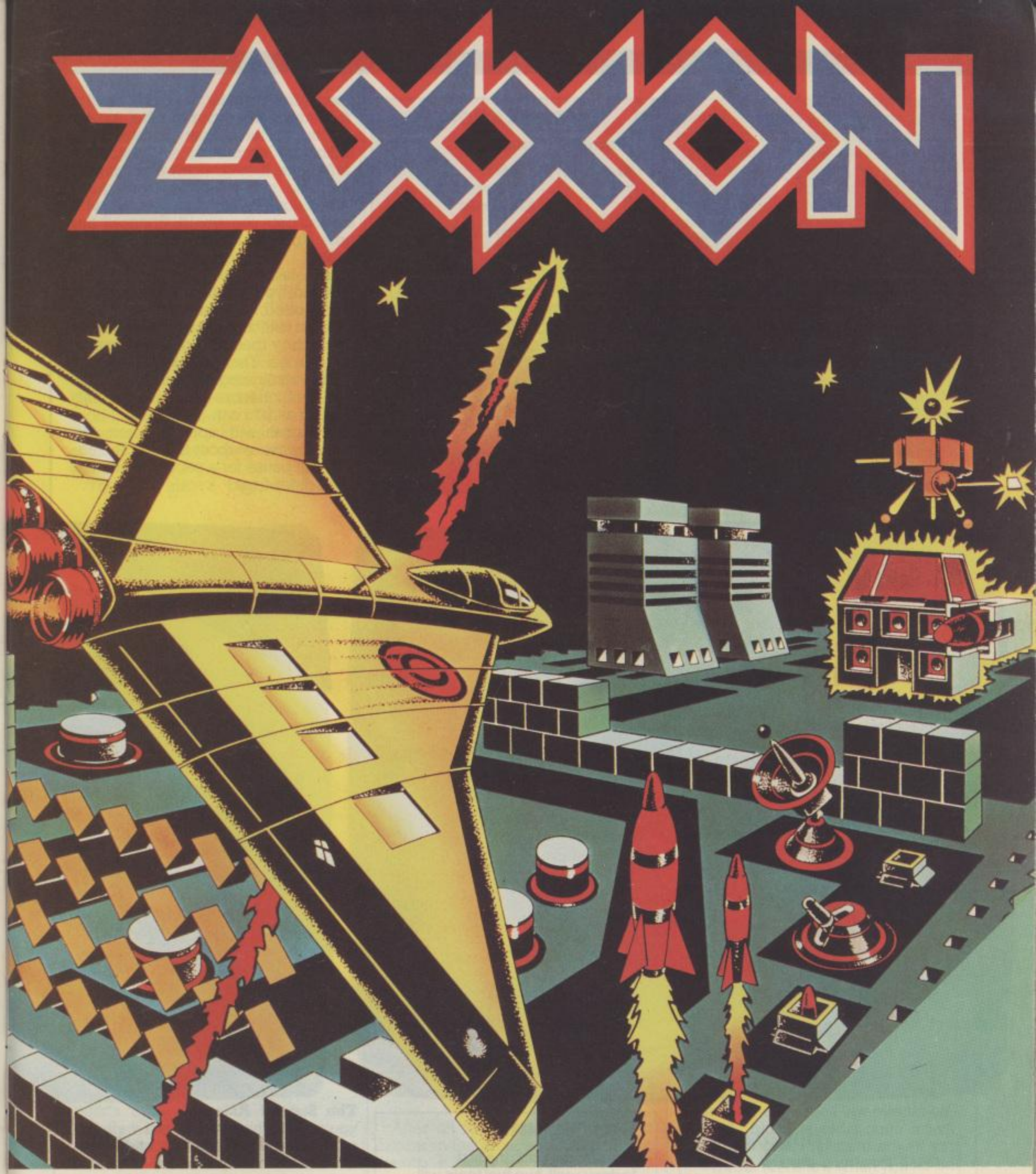
ZAXXON



Long popular in the arcades, *Zaxxon* has been converted onto popular micros. Danny Pearson vies with the evil robot warlord.

The first thing you notice about *Zaxxon* is the 3D effect. It also has a diagonal scrolling method which is very effective. The version reviewed here is for the Coleco – but the game now also runs on Commodore 64, Spectrum 48K and Atari machines. There are differences between games.

The Story of Zaxxon. Zaxxon, the evil robot warlord, is taking control of the galaxy! He had made a once-free asteroid belt his stronghold, from which he rules his minions.

It is your job to stop him before he enslaves the galaxy for ever.

To help you, you are equipped with a Starfighter. Your fighter has three instruments: a laser cannon, an altitude indicator and a fuel guage.

The laser canon is mounted in the nose of your fighter. It can destroy everything except the walls of →

Zaxxon's fortress.

The object of the game, of course, is to destroy Zaxxon. En route you will encounter two asteroid fortresses. First comes the patrolling, outer asteroid. After that comes space where you must battle Zaxxon fighters. Then comes the main asteroid which contains Zaxxon himself.

Now onto the things you will meet in *Zaxxon*.

Laser turrets look like small orange pyramids. They fire only once. But on levels three and four they can track you.

Fuel tanks are a green cylindrical shape. They are essential to survival, and you must refuel very often on level four. To refuel, you simply shoot a fuel tank.

Missiles. If you stay too high for too long, a missile will be fired at you. The missile will home into you, and is almost impossible to avoid. To destroy it, you must hit it two more than the skill level you are on. So a level three missile, for example, must be hit five times.

The first asteroid. After you have selected your game, you will see your fighter flying towards an indestructable wall. This is the first asteroid fortress. After the wall, you meet fuel dumps and laser turrets.

After a few minutes another wall will appear. This usually has a deflector shield built into it (except on level one, the first time around). It seems impossible to get through. You must take your fighter to 2½ points from the bottom on the altitude indicator. Success!

As if the shield wasn't enough, you will also see a fighter coming towards you. To get it, pull up as soon as you pass the shield, firing all the time. You should hit it with no trouble at all.

Space. After you leave the first asteroid, you will fly into space. This is inhabited by fighters. The first six fighters will come in groups of three. To destroy these, fly down as low as you can go. Then attack.

The remaining fighters are destroyed much more easily if you climb as high as you can go.

A signal will appear when the fighter wave is about to end. The action will pause for a second when the last fighter fires.

SPECIFICATION

Name: Zaxxon

Suppliers: CBS Electronics
US Gold

Machines: Atari VCS and HCS
Colecovision
Commodore 64
Spectrum 48K

Price: £28.95 (Coleco)
£27.95 (Atari)
£9.99 (CBM 64, Spectrum)

Rating: Value 3
Graphics 4
Sound 3
Gameplay 4

The Second Asteroid. After space you will be flying towards a wall, exactly the same as the first asteroid. It is inhabited by three enemies: mobots, fighters and – last but not least – Zaxxon.

Mobots are small, cylindrical robots. They fire lasers at your fighter. These shots are deadlier than the laser turrets, because the mobots can fire more than once and they can move.

On levels one and two they are easy to pick off. This is not so on levels three and four. On these levels they can make their blasts track you.

HELPFUL HINT

As you approach the first fortress wall, two fuel tanks will come into view. Try to swoop down and get these. This is very helpful but difficult on level four.

On level one and two try to blast everything you can. If you do, you should get a new ship before you leave the first asteroid.

On level four, try and anticipate which turrets won't fire.

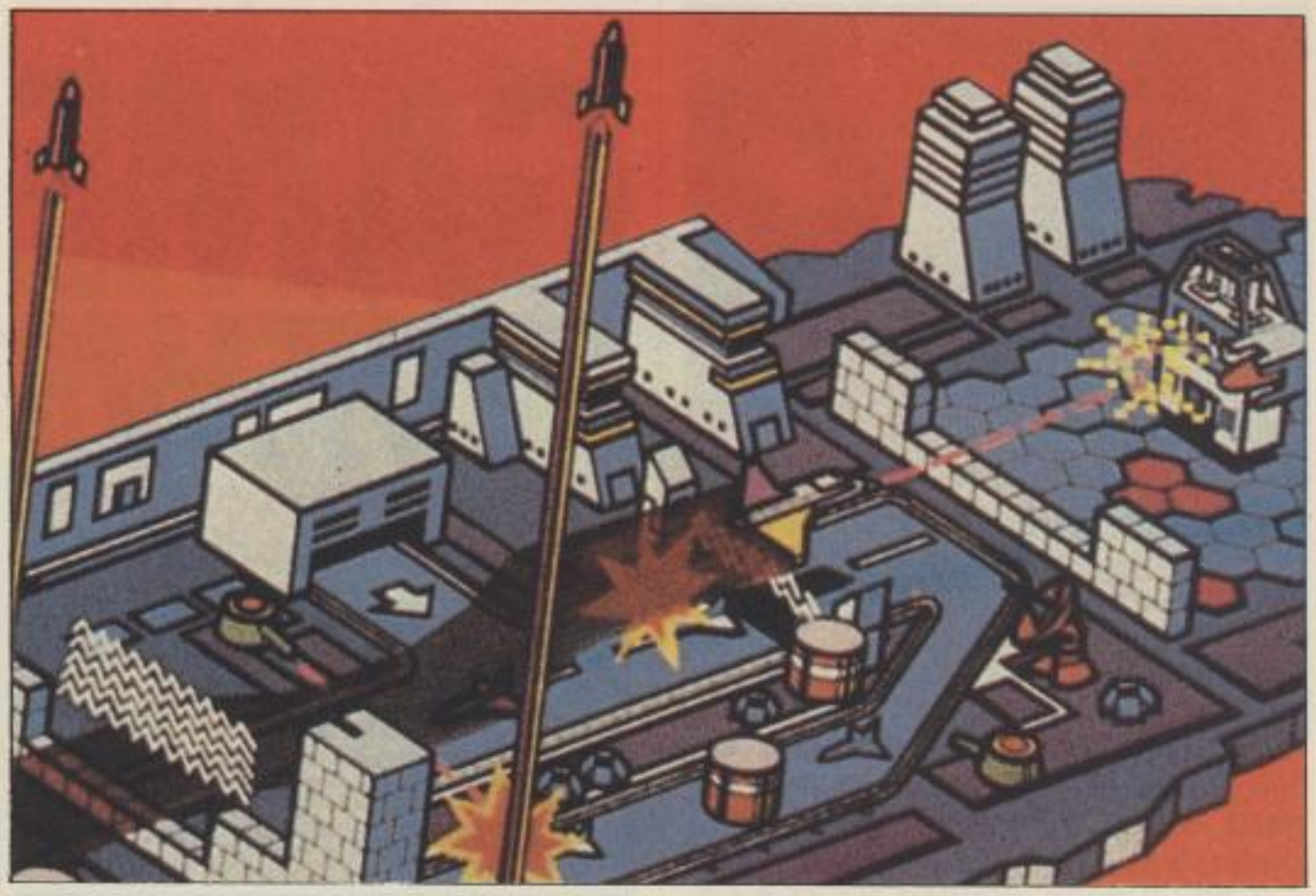
Finally there is, of course, Zaxxon. Zaxxon looks like two dustbins stuck together. Two mobots hover on his shoulders. The last feature on him is the missile, which he will launch at you.

He holds the missile under his arm and you must destroy it before launch. If you do, it will blow up in his face and you will get 5,000 bonus points. To destroy the missile, take your fighter to 2½ points from the bottom on the altitude indicator, line up with the missile and fire repeatedly.

Bugs and Eggs. There are initials in this game. They appear in the right-hand corner of the screen. So if you suddenly see the letters GL – eureka! Unfortunately, I found them quite by accident and have never found them again.

There is also a bug which can greatly boost your score. When you reach Zaxxon, shoot his missile in the normal way. Then, in the second or two before it explodes, try to crash into one of the lasers he fired. With practice you can do this every time. Zaxxon will be destroyed, you will get 5,000 bonus points, and another crack at Zaxxon without having to go through asteroids one and two.

But there is a way for Zaxxon to cheat. If you destroy a laser turret as soon as it appears on screen, and remain in front of the crater, it will fire at you. So if you suddenly die for no reason, it will be because of this.



After all that, there is a sequel to *Zaxxon* in the arcades. Called *Super Zaxxon*, it hasn't yet been converted to run on home systems.

There are few differences between the two games. The main one is that your fighter moves faster. Then, instead of flying into space after the first asteroid, you go through a tunnel. Also, Zaxxon is replaced by a fire-breathing dragon.

Super Zaxxon is much harder than its predecessor, and hasn't proved as popular. But how many gamers could cope with an even more exhausting version of this addictive game? □

HELPFUL HINT

If your fuel is low when you reach the second asteroid, you must get the two fuel tanks that are over the wall. Even though you don't use fuel in space or on the asteroid, you do when you get to Zaxxon.

After the fuel tanks, a fighter and a blue mobot will be coming at you. On level four take out only the fighter because it is easier to hit than the mobot.

October GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TV Gamer's review panel takes an honest look at the bewildering choice of computer and dedicated-machine games flooding the shops. We recommend what to buy – or avoid! Above all, enjoy your game.

ATTACK OF THE MUTANT CAMELS
Machine: Atari 400/800/XL + joystick
Supplier: Llamasoft
Price: £6.00
Type of game: sci-fi shoot 'em up

With Llamasoft's well-known reputation for quality software, I looked forward in anticipation as the program loaded easily into the computer.

A title screen allowed me to modify skill level, have one or two players, and enabled defending fire to have greater or lesser effectiveness. So far so good. But on playing the game, I was profoundly disappointed.

For all of you sci-fi freaks, the scenario is lifted directly from the Imperial attack on the snow planet of Hoth in the film *The Empire Strikes Back*. You know, the bit where huge four-legged tanks – known as AT-AT's – attack the rebel base, which is protected by a handful of ineffectual low-level fighters.

Llamasoft has made some cosmetic changes, so that AT-ATs become mutant camels, and the snow planet is replaced by a background of Egyptian pyramids.

A scrolling ten-screen area provides the battleground over which the player's fighter must destroy a wave of six mutant camels. Meanwhile, these are steadfastly plodding towards the far right of the screen. A primitive radar screen above the "action" (sic) shows the relative positions of camels and fighter. Once the former reach the right-hand edge of this, the player's base is assumed to be overrun and the game ends.

The camels can take a varying number of hits, dependent upon game level, before being destroyed. Their defence against the fighter is to spit out lethal blobs (which resemble the base-stars in that old Atari favourite *Star Raiders* – not for nothing Geoff Minter's favourite game!).

The fighter is difficult to control. This, added to the fact that hits can only be made on a camel at very short range, makes for a frustrating game, even on the "simplest" level. Enough to give one the hump (sorry!).

After a wave of camels has been destroyed, the fighter enters a hyperspace phase. As it speeds up to hyperjump, it must avoid collision with approaching missiles. Exciting stuff, eh? This is again difficult.

If the player is fortunate enough to overcome this obstacle, he is faced with a rewarding . . . further wave of six camels. This time, they move slightly faster over a background differing only in colour. Yawn!

Points are scored for hitting and destroying the camels, and for surviving hyperspace jumps.

Graphically, I found the game to be unimaginative and of poor quality, considering the power of even a 16k Atari. The plodding animation of the camels was uninspiring and lifeless, and the tiny fighter could have been anything.

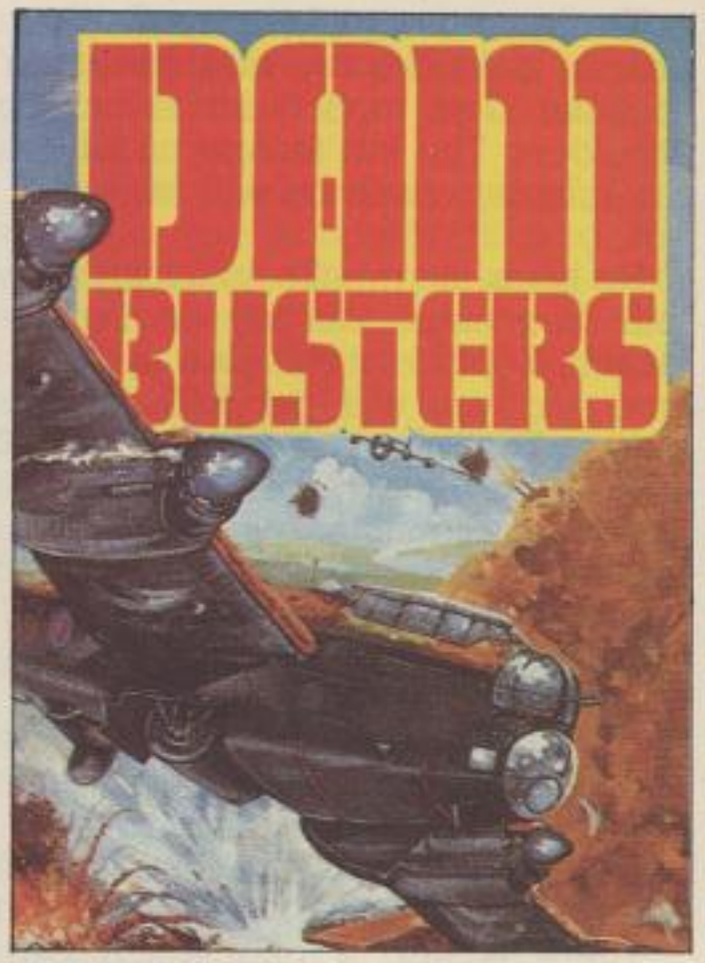
Background colours were . . . well, colours. The pyramids were initially nice but got a little tedious after an hour or so's play. Strangely, Llamasoft has used flashing bands of colour to give the screen depth, yet has the camels moving left to right across the screen. Maybe a better effect could have been achieved with the fighter flying into the screen, with the camels moving towards it?

Sound appeared to be limited to various zapping noises and little else.

Referring back to the cassette inlay, the machine code scrolling may indeed be smooth. But this in itself does not make for an "awesome" game.

Graham Cook

Value: 2
Graphics: 2
Sound: 1
Gameplay: 1



DAMBUSTERS
Machine: Atari 16k (joystick required
Supplier: Newmarket Distribution
Price: N/A
Type of game: flying/shoot 'em up

In this game you pilot a Lancaster bomber on a lonely mission to destroy a German dam on a river called the Upper Ruhr. The date is 16th May 1943.

The game loads in two parts. The first is a demo program, and the computer flies the plane over the different landscapes while playing a very familiar war tune.

When it is complete, the game automatically loads and runs the second part. First you select which of the five levels you would like to start on. These range from flying school to group captain. Pressing the joystick button shows you on the runway; pushing the joystick right starts your engines. Left drops the bouncing bombs. Pulling back causes your plane to climb, and forward to drive. The fire button fires your machine guns.

You start off by flying along the North Sea and the Dutch coast to the target area. You fly along land and water destroying enemy planes, ships, ack-ack gun enplacements, tanks and German weapon-making factories. When you reach the dam you drop your bomb, and hopefully hit it!

After that you are shown a reconnaissance picture of the dam. If you hit it, you are moved up a level. If not, down and your score is reset to zero.

The display is set out with score and high-score at the top, and altitude and fuel gauges at the bottom.

Dam Busters is a good game with *Scramble/Super Cobra* features.

Alex McKenzie

Value: 3
Graphics 3
Sound: 3
Gameplay 4

CAVERNS OF KHAFKA
Machine: Atari HCS (16k cass/disk)
Supplier: US Gold
Price:£8.95
Type of game: adventure

Caverns of Khafka is a cunningly annoying adventure-type game. It is manufactured in the UK by US Gold under licence from Cosmi.

You must explore a large cavernous tomb to search out hidden treasures.

On your way to finding the treasure you may, and probably will, come across a wide assortment of gruesomes. These like nothing better in life than playing with your life. They include vampire bats, ladder monsters, and what looks like a multi-coloured, and very fast, mushroom. You can also come across death if you fall into an acid pit or run into one of the blue walls.

There are four levels to this game, with the fourth being the hardest of the lot. Here most of the surroundings are invisible. Also, this is a four-way scrolling screen adventure game – so you've lots to get your teeth into.

Dave Harvey

Value: 4
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 4

To make things easier for our readers, below is a list of the pages on which you will find reviews for your machine. BUT NOTE: most games are being converted to run on popular machines. Keep all TVG reviews even if the game is not for your machine – it's likely it may soon be.

GAMES	Pages
Amstrad	45
Atari	44, 45, 50
BBC	50, 51
Commodore 64	46, 52, 58, 59
CGL M5	51
Dragon	47
Intellivision	54
Oric/Atmos	47, 48
Spectrum	48, 53, 54, 57

ROLAND ON THE ROPES
Machine: Amstrad CPC 464
Supplier: Amsoft
Price: £8.95
Type of game: maze/skill

Roland on the Ropes is another of the new Amsoft games.

Using the keyboard or a joystick, you manoeuvre Roland through a stone-walled catacomb. You must find the exit, which is at level one – you start at level thirty one. There are various meanies in the catacombs, such as ghosts, rats and drops of acid which rob you of your strength. These must be avoided or shot.

As you explore the maze, you will discover treasures – scrolls, jars, heads, ankhs and vases. If you discover a green bottle, you're in luck. It is the elixir of life and gives you strength. You may also discover bullets which replenish your ammunition.

When you reach the exit, all your strength is returned plus 10,000 points, and 1,000 points for each treasure you have collected. On later stages, you encounter more difficult monsters which must be shot.

The sound is very good (the game starts with the tune "Do not forsake me, O my darling"). The graphics are brilliant, and it is a fun game to play.

Andrew Marshall

Value: 2.5
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: 3
Gameplay 3.5

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October GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

PETCH
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Anirog Software
Price: £6.95
Type of game: skill
This is a very good game for either one or two players. It is turbo-loaded, and only takes one and a half minutes to load.

Petch is a cuddly little penguin, controlled by joystick or keyboard. He has to travel around a maze of ice blocks to collect a hoard of diamonds.

On his way, he must avoid the snowbow and snowbox monsters who will kill Petch if they touch him.

Petch can fight back by sliding the ice blocks at the monsters, squashing them and gaining points. Or he can destroy the snow monsters' eggs before they hatch.

Extra points are awarded if Petch can arrange his diamonds into a row.

Four lives are given with an extra life at 40,000 points. If Petch can survive for two minutes, he moves on to the next level, and starts over again. There is not a lot of difference on each level, but it does get harder to dodge the monsters on the higher levels.

Extra points are awarded if Petch can kill all the monsters in a time limit of sixty seconds: a very hard feat to accomplish.

You can use the pause game facility, or option to re-start game, if you've made a hash of it.

There is a slightly annoying wait as Petch moves on to the next level, when the bonus score is displayed and seven penguins do a little dance to Beethoven's *Joy* theme.

But the graphics and sound in *Petch* are good. This game is definitely worth buying.

Emma O'Brian

Value: 4
Graphics: 4
Sound: 4
Gameplay: 4.5

WEST
Machine: Commodore 64 (disc drive)
Supplier: Talent Computer Systems
Price: £9.95
Type of game: adventure
Indians, robbers and vultures are just some of the hazards to be negotiated while trying to find missing loot stashed away in a wild west town.

In this real-time adventure, you are given thirty lives to start with. You certainly need them: any hesitation on the keyboard and a life is lost.

Meet a robber when you are carrying a pack of cards, then shoot him immediately.

A nice touch is the beautiful illustration of the town which appears each time you enter the main street.

A save and restore facility is included for use in the game.

The only two complaints are that, when all thirty lives have been lost, the whole game has to be reloaded to play again. I also found the gun essential in this game is in your possession at your first life, but appears to have disappeared on subsequent lives.

JP Thompson

Value: 3
Graphics: 2
Sound: –
Gameplay: 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GILLIGAN'S GOLD
Machine: Commodore 64 (+ joystick)
Supplier: Ocean Software
Price: £6.90
Type of game: climbing skill
From the title page, you are led to believe that the setting is South American. You control Gilligan, who must be fearlessly steered through a complex mine network to pick up and place in a wheelbarrow no less than twenty-two bags of gold.

Although the mine is three screens wide – containing six, seven and nine bags respectively – the screens needn't be completed sequentially. You can move horizontally from section to section, to a later part of the same long passageway.

The bags are collected one at a time by pressing the fire button, and deposited similarly on the uppermost level. You must climb up and down ladders and along flat caverns to perform this task.

In the second and third stages, a lift is provided to access all bags. If you should step off any level without a ladder directly adjacent, or run out of ladder when moving downwards, you plunge down the deep mineshaft into oblivion!

Hindrances, ever present, are in the shape of two masked bandits who kill you on contact, and high-speed coal trucks which move to and fro between mine sections.

Bandits may be temporarily knocked out by releasing a gold bag on them. This is often needed – because when carrying a bag, you rightfully must move quite sluggishly. You can also stun bandits by hacking them with a pick for the few seconds while this privilege durates.

Each bag placed in the wheelbarrow earns points, and the bonus – a measure of time remaining – is restored to 4,000. If you do not deposit the next bag by the time the bonus reaches zero, you lose a life.

When a bandit arrives at the same section as you, an ominous tune is played to signify his entrance, and contributes well to the atmosphere of the game. A very welcome feature is that, when you are destroyed, you don't restart from scratch. All is as you left it; bags already collected do not reappear.

Throughout the game, a pleasant tune plays. I would have preferred to see a greater variety of sound effects incorporated. There is, for instance, no sound to register that a bag has been dropped into the wheelbarrow, nor during the time the pick is in use.

Farooq Agha

Value: 3
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: 3.5
Gameplay: 3

BEAM RIDER
Machine: Dragon 32 (joystick required)
Supplier: Microdeal
Price: £8.00
Type of game: arcade
The object of this game is to clear the screen of blocks, avoiding chasers and spinners.

The chasers follow you slowly, trying to get in your way. The spinners bounce around the screen at random. Contact with either means losing a life – you begin with three lives.

There are also energisers in the game. When hit, they double your points scored for a short period of time.

The graphics in *Beam Rider* are very basic, and the gameplay difficult to master with the awkward Dragon joysticks. The sound is reasonable, but cannot change my views on an awful game. If you are contemplating buying *Beam Rider* all I can say is don't bother!

Jeremy Wellard

Value: 1
Graphics: 1
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 2

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

GREEN CROSS TOAD
Machine: Oric 1/Atmos
Supplier: IJK Software
Price: £7.50
Type of game: Frogger-type
Green Cross Toad is a variation of the arcade favourite, *Frogger*.

For those who have never played *Frogger* – if there are any – the object of the game is to guide the frog safely home across the motorway, avoiding the traffic, then help him to cross the treacherous river, using the turtles and logs, into his home on the bank.

But beware the diving turtles and the snake that patrols the river bank.

If you catch a fly, you are awarded bonus points.

This game is addictive, but the graphics could be better. The colour is good and the sound effects are excellent, with lots of tunes.

The game also features a hall of fame and fairly good instructions.

Mark Southgate

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 4
Gameplay: 4
Arcade: 3

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

ORIC TREK
Machine: Oric 1 48k
Supplier: Salamander Software
Price: £9.95
Type of game: strategy
These are the voyages of the starship Enterprise. . .

After the game has loaded, you are asked to enter your skill level, from zero to nine, and the length of game, from zero to two. You then receive orders from starfleet command: your task is to rid the galaxy of the Klingons.

The display shows a short- and long-range scanner, so you can see where you are. The stardate and damage reports are also displayed.

Most of the keys are used in the game. And the various tasks include impulse drive, warp drive, hyper-probe, phasers and torpedoes.

The game is hard to master because you can easily get destroyed if you are positioned near a Klingon ship, and badly damaged. Then you might be unable to move or use phasers, and so are trapped in the Klingons' sights.

Stuart Croot

Value: 2
Graphics: 2
Sound: 1
Gameplay: 2

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

STARSHIP
Machine: Oric 1/Atmos 48k
Supplier: Sector Seven Software
Price: £6.95
Type of game: shoot 'em up
"You are the commander of three heavily armed starships, defending your sector from the war-fleet of the Cirellion Empire." So say the starship instructions.

Eight alien squadrons are attacking you in formation. Each squadron has eight ships to destroy. When all eight squadrons are destroyed, another wing moves into attack.

When playing the game, aliens – who shoot at you vertically and diagonally – move down the screen towards you. When they reach the end of the screen, they reappear at the top.

There is a high-score chart and a chart that shows how many points you get for killing the aliens.

I would not recommend this game to any Oric owner as it is slow and boring. *The Ultra* or *Xenon 1* would be much better value and should keep any arcade freak interested.

Robert Kilduff

Value: 2
Graphics: 2
Sound: 1
Gameplay: 1

October GAME REVIEWS

UNITED
Machine: Spectrum 48K
Supplier: Strategy Games
Price: £5.95
Type of game: strategy
If you have ever fancied being a football manager without the risk that usually accompanies such a position, then this sporting package from Strategy Games should satisfy your craving without burning a hole in your pocket.

You start off with a fourth division club which you name yourself. Then you use your modest starting budget to buy a team of players in the three main playing areas: midfield, defence and forward.

After some organisation and perhaps a little training, you launch your team into its first match of the season.

Before each game you are asked whether you wish to play clean or dirty. Be warned! You may gain bonus strength for bad play, but you also gain penalties and player suspension.

The game is graphically displayed on a 2D field viewed from above, with a constant update on the playing situation from the computer. The ball is shown as a dot on the field. Each half lasts about forty-five minutes, as in real football. But a United minute is about four seconds so the game really lasts five minutes.

Like real football, you may follow your team's fortunes by keeping a close eye on the league table. That gives you a constant update on your and others' league positions. The others are all under the computer's control.

To ultimately achieve promotion, your team must be at the top of the league at the end of the season. This is easier said than done. It is important to remember that goals conceded are as important as goals scored, for gaining high league positions.

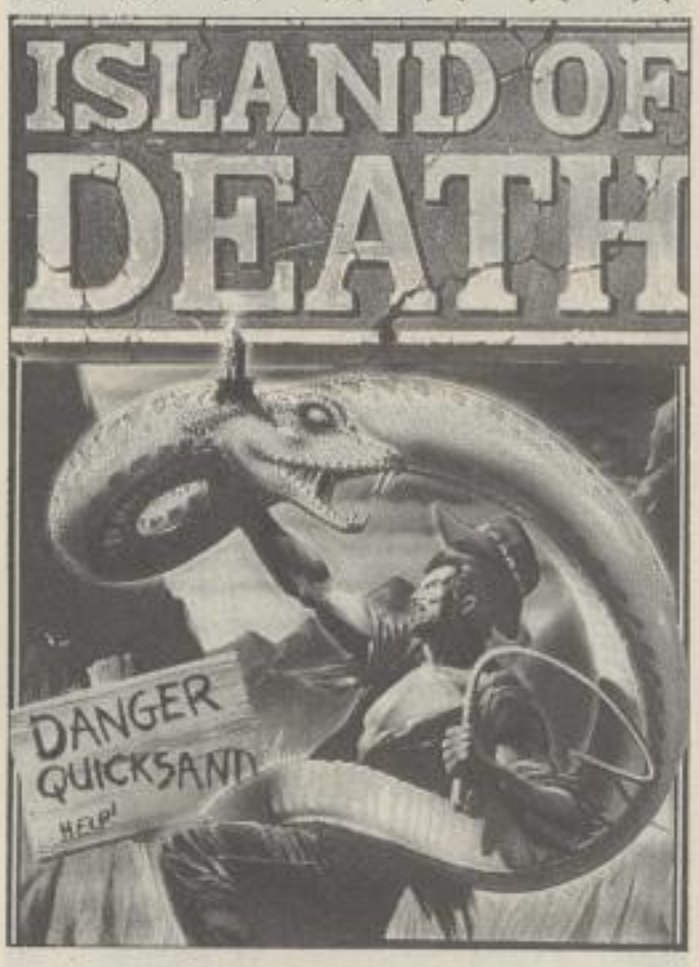
There are plenty of tactics you can use. They include scouting the opponents' weakest points, trying to gain an advantage in certain playing areas, and training. If not complied with, these will give fatal results.

In conclusion, I recommend this game's accurate representation of the ups and downs of football management, its essential emphasis on make or break decisions, its pleasant representation of the match action, and much more. I can see no better package for the ambitious computer football manager.

Matthew Jarvis

Value 4
Graphics 2
Sound 2
Gameplay 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



ISLAND OF DEATH
Machine: Oric-1 (no joystick)
Supplier: Ocean Software
Price: £6.95
Type of game: arcade adventure
You have just been shipwrecked on a coral reef next to a dangerous island. To survive you must discover six treasures and return them to your hut located at the north of the island.

While searching for these six treasures, you will have to play various games. Most of these contain one of the six valuable treasures.

Before you begin this perilous saga, you are shown some instructions on screen. Read these very carefully and choose up to nine men, hard or easy gameplay and whether you prefer fast or slow speed.

The graphics and sound aren't too good. But on the whole it is an enjoyable game.

Lee Street

Value 4
Graphics 2.5
Sound 2.5
Gameplay 3

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

PROBE 3
Machine: Oric-1/Atmos 48K
Supplier: IJK Software
Price: £7.50
Type of game: arcade/space shoot 'em up
Probe 3 is an arcade-type game written entirely in machine code. It provides good action and smooth high-resolution graphics.

The object of the game is to zap as many oncoming alien space craft as you can. There are twenty alien space craft in each wave. Shoot these twenty and you go onto the next level.

The screen is laid out well and shows the rear of your space craft and alien space craft flying towards it. There are some good 3D effects.

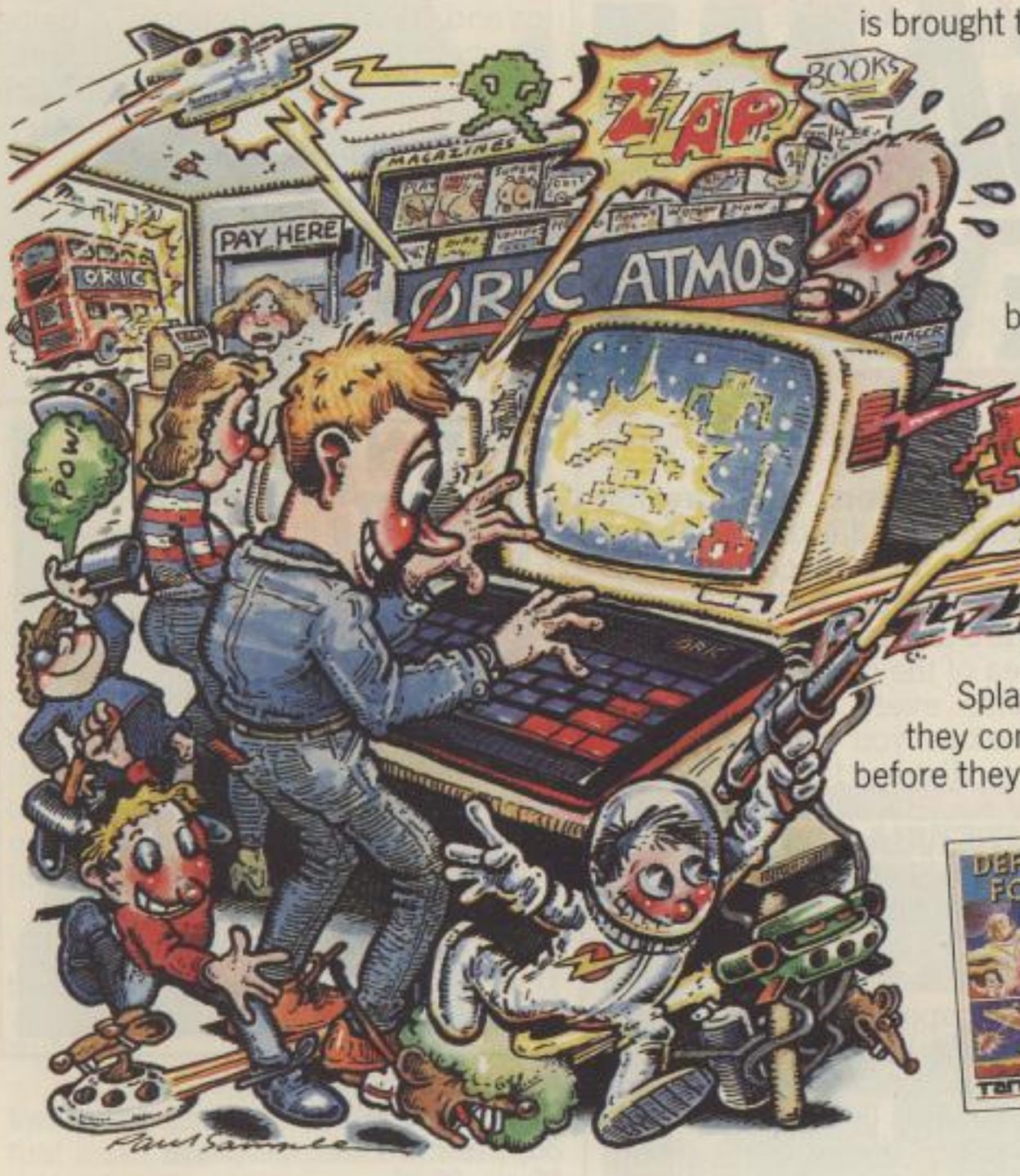
To survive, you must destroy the alien space craft and evade the plasma bolts fired from them. From the second level onwards, you must also evade missiles fired from underneath your space craft. To ensure your missiles meet the alien space craft, you must time your strikes to perfection.

Each alien space craft you destroy adds points to your score. The ten highest scores are then displayed in a hall of fame.

Stuart Croot

Value 3
Graphics 3
Sound 4
Gameplay 4.5
Arcade 3

The very best in arcade action–



is brought to you by Tansoft – the specialists of the Oric-1 and Atmos Computers.

The games that people are fighting for are:–

Defence Force:
Pilot your space-craft through alien territory and fight off the enemy approaching from both sides. **48K. £7.95.**

Ultima Zone:
Shoot the Walkons, avoid the bouncing Brunes and battle your way through the satellite zone. **48K. £8.50.**

Rat Splat:
A revolting game.
Splat the rats in the sewer before they consume the cheese, and destroy the monsters before they consume you! **48K. £7.95.**

or let's get down to business!

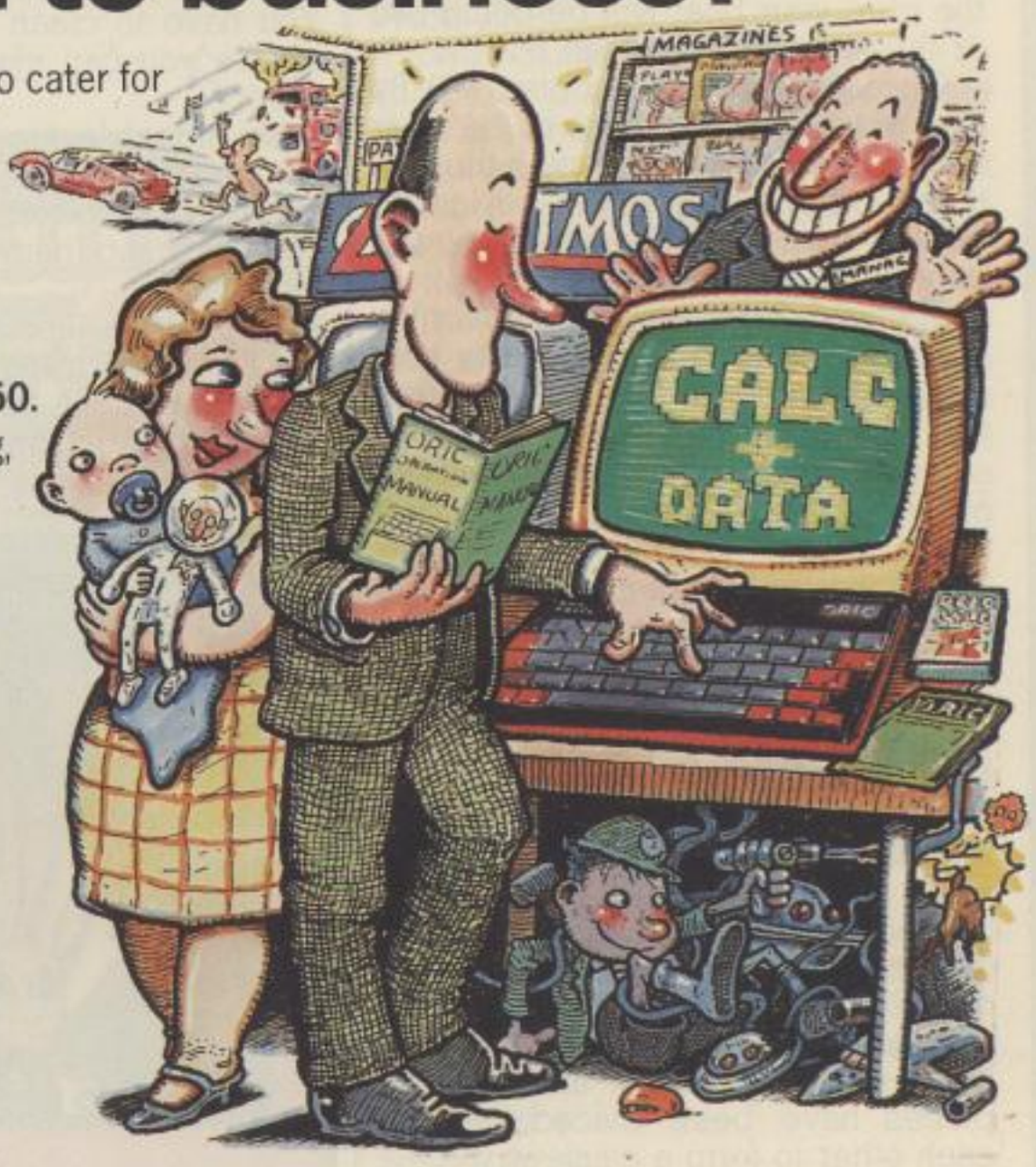
Tansoft produce a wealth of business and utility software to cater for every interest. The 'not so' games-minded people may be coming to grips with:–

Author: A powerful word-processor program which includes word-wrap and word-count. Ideal for letters and reports. **48K. £14.50.**

Oric Calc: A full spread-sheet program allows you to sum columns or rows and apply complex formulae. **48K. £14.50.**

Oric Cad: A computer aided design program for displaying, rotating, enlarging and shading objects on the screen. **48K. £9.99.**

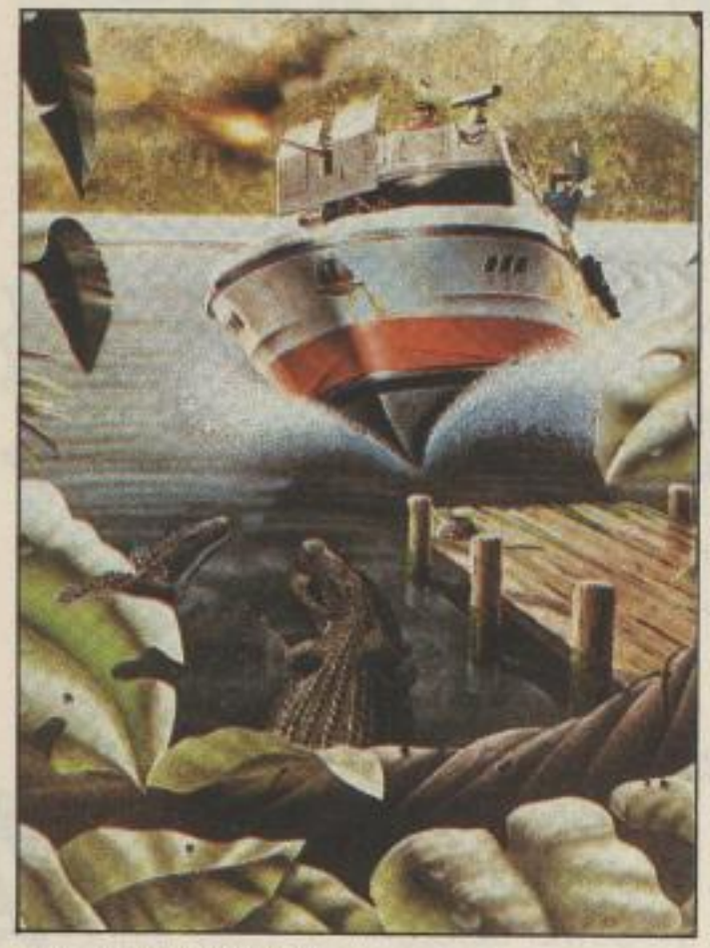
For the full range of Tansoft software – which currently numbers over 20 titles – pick up a catalogue in your local Computer Store or contact Tansoft at Unit 1, The Techno Park, 645 Newmarket Road, Cambridge. Tel. Teversham (02205) 2261.



TANSOFT

October GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



RIVER RESCUE
Machine: Atari 400/600/800/XL (+ 16K + joystick)
Supplier: Creative Sparks
Price: £8.95
Type of game: shoot 'em up
You are the owner of the fastest power boat in the region. You must steer your boat along the river picking up scientists from a jetty on one side and dropping them off on the other side at another jetty.

Of course, life isn't that easy. You must avoid or shoot obstacles in your path: crocodiles, logs and islands.

If you manage to drop off six or more scientists, you will have to successfully steer through a set of piers to get an extra boat. This will not last long, because when you start after the pier, your boat will be going two or three times faster than normal.

Occasionally, a helicopter will fly over you and drop mines in the river ahead. You must shoot a path through these, otherwise you will no longer be the owner of the fastest power boat in the region.

The sound is average but effective, as are the graphics. I can't say how long this game will hold your attention. I haven't had enough.

Jamie Gladden

Value: 2.5
Graphics: 2.5
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 2.5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

BLOCKBUSTER
Machine: BBC B
Supplier: Micropower
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill
This is yet another version of the arcade hit *Q*Bert*, but with a few slight variations. The usual pyramid has been sliced vertically, and the two pieces have been placed next to each other to form a causeway.

The characters have also changed. Instead of Q*Bert, you play the part of Harvey the rabbit. Slinky has also gone, to be replaced by Reynard, a cunning fox. But the cascading balls are still present.

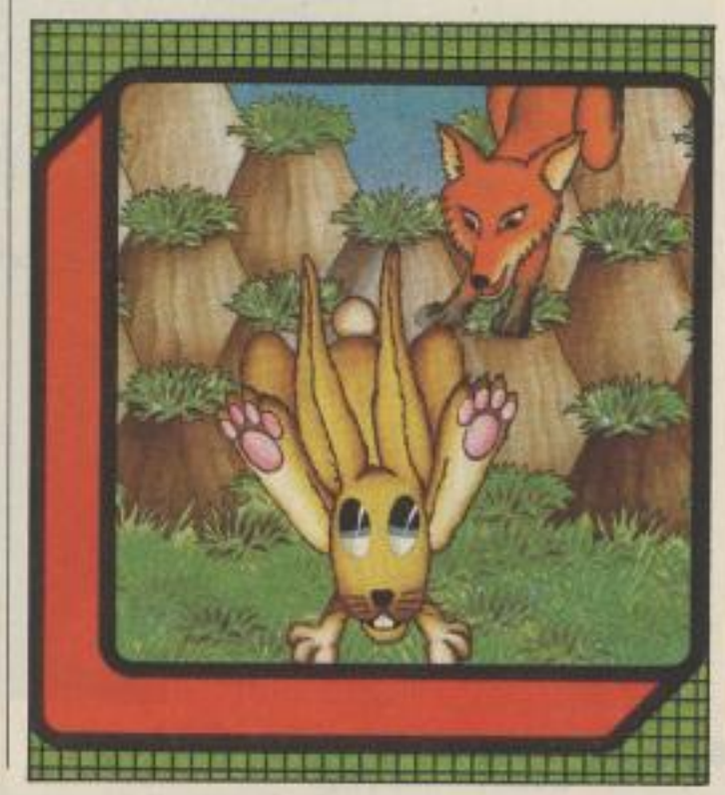
The idea of the game is to bounce Harvey onto every rock, changing colours before you move onto the next sheet. Reynard is the one to watch out for. He first appears as a ball bouncing towards the bottom. When he reaches the end of the causeway, he turns into a fox and starts after your blood.

Luckily for Harvey, there are two spinning escape discs he can use when Reynard is hot on his trail. If Harvey jumps onto one at an opportune moment, Reynard will leap after him and plummet to his death. You will be magically transported to the top of the causeway. Unfortunately, the discs can be used only once, so they must be used wisely.

Bonus points can be gained by jumping on the little creatures which leave dirty foot prints behind them. You have to clean up the footprints before you can move onto the next sheet.

On higher levels, you have to jump onto each rock twice. This is made even more difficult by a fox who keeps turning them back to their original colour.

Above you flies an albatross who occasionally drops rocks onto the causeway. If he jumps onto one of these rocks, it could prove fatal for Harvey.

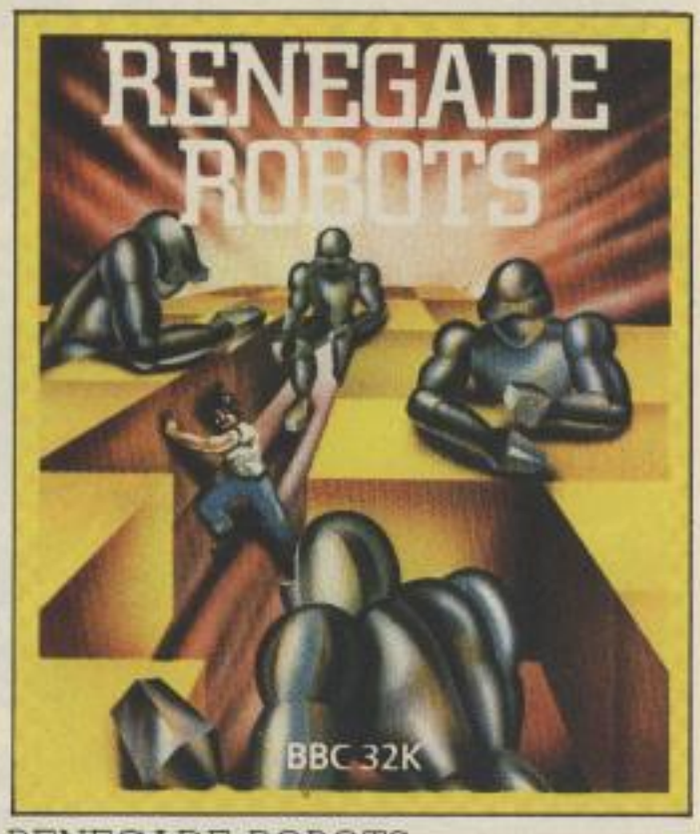


I felt this game had a slight edge over *Q*Bert*. It has very cute graphics and clever sound effects. A game for every arcade player's collection.

Chris Blatch

Value: 3
Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 3
Arcade: 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



RENEGADE ROBOTS
Machine: BBC B
Supplier: Senator Software
Price: £6.95
Type of game: maze/skill
Yet another version of *Pengi*, but quite a good one. However, instead of controlling a penguin you've now got a little man dressed in Wrangler jeans. He's got the task of dealing with a bunch of megalomaniac Metal Mickeys whose control cubes, have scattered.

You must correctly align three control cubes. If that's too hard a task for you, you can always squash the old tin-heads flat by simply pushing a few cubes about. Truthfully, I prefer the latter, since it saves time.

There are some nice touches, such as a preview counter which lets you plan out attack – but this immediately expires as soon as you move. You can also choose from one of three speed levels.

A nifty tune introduces the game. But apart from that there's only the odd beep or squeak during gameplay. I feel that the sound capabilities of the Beeb could have been used more extensively.

Graphics are good compared to many standards. Movement is flicker-free and you can usually outpace the robots. Gameplay is pretty hectic in the higher levels. I found myself struggling to get onto the next screen.

Mohammed Waseem Aghar

Value: 4
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2.5
Gameplay: 3

A MAZE IN SPACE
Machine: BBC B
Supplier: Opus Software
Price: £9.95
Type of game: sci-fi shoot 'em up
This game is a weird variety of a couple of space games.

You are in control of a rather clumsy-looking spaceship which you must manoeuvre around a large maze of caverns in outer space. The object of the game is to destroy the main alien base and also to get a very high score with only one life.

As you do this you encounter several enemies, including alien spaceships. They look like tie-fighters out of *Star Wars*. Meteors are indestructible.

To get extra points, you can bomb fuel tanks, alien bases and something that looks like a darlek. To gain entrance to the caverns you must fly through an asteroid belt and dodge a few planets if you don't want to lose a life.

Added features include a high-score table, silent play, fast or slow game, and random or fixed starts.

This game is a good one, but you only have one life which spoils the gameplay a bit.

Karl Flower

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2
Gameplay 3.5

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

XANADU COTTAGE/EBONY TOWER
Machine: BBC B
Supplier: Alligata
Price: £7.95
Type of game: adventure
Before starting on your quests, in both games it is a good idea to have a pencil and paper ready to draw a map.

In *Xanadu Cottage*, you are not told what your mission is. You start in a forest which contains a chasm, river, cottage and garden. You must explore these thoroughly, picking up useful items on the way.

This is an excellent game and tension runs high as you discover an amazing new secret. It is such a large adventure that it will take months of logical and hard work to solve.

In *Ebony Tower*, you must battle your way through swamps and forests to find a crystal. Having handed this crystal to some hard-up orcs, they will release their captive: the Pixie king. He will give you the necessaries to combat a fierce dragon, known to be hiding in an ebony tower.

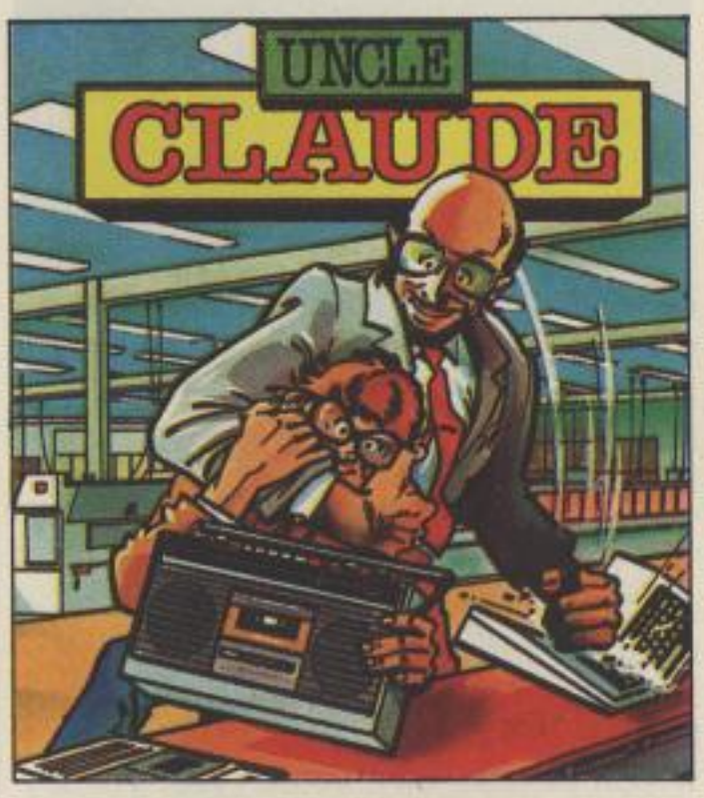
The game sounds good, but don't be fooled: there are no graphics and you are limited in your choice of actions. It is easy to become bored with this game.

For a double adventure tape, it is certainly value for money and should appeal to younger children. Definitely a must for a strong-hardy adventure.

Edward Woolf

Value: 4/3
Graphics: 0/0
Sound: 2/0
Gameplay: 3/2

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆



UNCLE CLAUDE
Machine: BBC B
Supplier: Alligata
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill
Uncle Claude, or *Electro Freddy* as its name changes to when the game is run (TVG, September), is a frighteningly simple game. So simple it could easily have turned into a three-hour wonder. But the authors have put in quite a few really nice touches, some of which have been capitalised on to sell the product.

Your character in this industrial scenario is Micro Mickey. Mickey has to place electrical goods on a conveyor belt.

The chasing factor is represented by Claude, who also adorns the cassette box and bears a striking resemblance to one Sir Clive Sinclair.

Claude is either a very dangerous person or has something contagious - on touching him, you immediately cop your wack. This can be avoided by hitting him from above or below with one of the electrical goods, giving you a couple of seconds safety.

This and other effects like falling BBC model Bs, phantom bowls of custard and moving force walls make this both an original and fun game.

The graphics are colourful, smooth and fast but not cartoon status. The usual host of whistling and plinking noises means good use of the Beeb's ENVELOPE command. And it's nice to see these can also be turned off in the twilight hours. The only grumbles are no joystick option and no second player option.

A McLoughlin

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 3

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

BOMBARD
Machine: CGL M5 (Basic 1)
Supplier: CGL Software
Price: £5.95
Type of game: shoot 'em up
Bombard is an excellent version of the old favourite, *Blitz*, in which your plane loses height on each pass of the screen. Your objective is to bomb the city below until completely flat, so that you can land safely.

The city is made up of twenty-nine towers, positioned next to each other. Each bomb that you drop hits just one tower and reduces it in height by a random amount. With the layout and heights of the city being random, there's no chance of knowing the exact time to drop bombs.

The plane travels at quite a speed, but slows down when a bomb is knocking away part of the city.

Your plane is a nicely animated jet, and the city is well done, too. The sound is reasonable during the game; the fanfare when you clear a sheet is excellent.

Bombard is a very enjoyable and addictive game, well worth adding to your collection.

Paul Bessant

Value: 4
Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Gameplay 4

October GAME REVIEWS

HOUSE OF USHER
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Anirog
Price: £6.95
Type of game: arcade/skill

House of Usher is a *Jet Set Willy* type of game. There are good graphics and sound, but the tune may get on your nerves after a bit.

Control is by joystick. On pressing the fire button, you are besieged by a graphic spectacular. Reach the door, and you enter the reception room. You can now enter one of nine rooms.

Room two, the high room, has walls which appear and disappear as they descend to your exit door. You must land on these disappearing walls. On entering a room you must leave by the marked exit door – you cannot leave by the way you entered.

If you are killed, you return to the reception room. You can again choose one of the nine rooms.

Room three is really the staircase. It has cannons which fire at you, as you run up ladders to get to your exit. I found that you did not need to be bang on ladders to run up them, like some games.

But trying to enter a room was very annoying. You have to stand in the door way, push the joystick up, and press the fire button. I found my man jumping up and down – yuk.

Room four is the greenhouse. You must collect strawberries before you can leave this room. From time to time you have a chance to collect flashing hearts for extra points.

Room five is the monster party. You have little Pac-men on legs running up and down. I found this very hard. Timing is crucial and just about impossible.

Room x is the treasure chamber. This can be entered only after all others have been negotiated. Use the spring to catapult yourself into room y.

Room y is the final room. This room contains the secret of the House of Usher. Each time you enter you can select a letter and see if it forms a part of the secret code word.

House of Usher is a good challenging game. The only quibble is that screens could have been made more different.

S Roberts

Value: 3
Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 3
Arcade: 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

TALES OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS
FROM
INTERCEPTOR
SOFTWARE
THE SAGA OF IMRAHIL THE KALENDAR PRINCE ON A QUEST TO FIND THE PRINCESS ANITRA FROM THE HAREM OF THE EVIL SULTAN SALADIN
SPEECH
SUITABLE FOR THE
commodore 64

TALES OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Interceptor Software
Price: £6.80
Type of game: climbing skill/shoot 'em up

As Imrahil the Kalendar prince, you must rescue your sister, the beautiful Princess Anitra, from the evil Sultan Saladin. You embark on a great quest which begins, as a voice (yes, voice!) will tell you, aboard Sinbad's ship.

The journey consists of eight screens or 'nights', the first of which is aboard the ship. You must dodge cannonballs, octopuses, huge birds, and climb ladders – all as part of your task of collecting golden jugs engraved with letters. These must be gathered in the correct order so as to spell out ARABIAN. Points are thus gained.

Accomplish this, and proceed to the next night. Now you are aboard a raft, equipped with bolts of lighting. You must avoid grey clouds which rise up out of the water. Destroy them and you earn twenty-five points. Also, every now and again an alligator rears its ugly head above the water, dives down, and reappears elsewhere. Elude its path or blast it. Otherwise lose a life!

Night three has the same theme as the first night, except that you must avoid bewitched genies and their lightning-quick energy bolts as you collect the jugs. This is harder in that you must select your route carefully. Linger in one place too long and POW! . . . a genie zaps you!

Next, you find yourself on a flying carpet, in combat with Saladin's men who are similarly airborne. You must also dodge crossbow bolts fired from the ground.

Onto night five, at the city gates of Baghdad. Again collect the jugs, but evade *Donkey Kong*-style barrels, plummeting fireballs, lightning bolts and a guard en route.

In night six you go about the usual task in the gardens of the Sultan's palace. But the meanie genies are back to hinder you as you dash about amidst some extraordinarily large flowers.

If at this stage you have any of your five lives left, you proceed to the penultimate screen, which is inside the palace. You are now confronted by virtually all your enemies from previous nights. Fight your way through (collecting, you guessed it, jugs!) and finally reach the battlements.

You are now again airborne, in a screen very similar to night five. If you rescue the princess, the game returns to night one.

The sound on this game is excellent – a complete piece plays in the background for a full three minutes before repeating itself (the music may be turned off if desired). The atmosphere is very authentic to the storyline. The palm trees, arches and domes of the palace, the style of the music, the clothes and, believe it or not, the headgear of the characters all contribute towards making this a game full of eastern promise. The graphics are very good indeed, with the possible exception of night two.

My only complaint is that the game is very difficult, and no skill levels exist. Whilst this presents a challenge, many will find that they can survive, say, the first two screens, only to subsequently lose all five lives on the third screen.

Farooq Agha

Value:
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: 5
Gameplay: 4

HARRIER ATTACK
Machine: Spectrum 16k, 48k
Supplier: Durrel Software
Price: £5.50
Type of game: Scramble-type

The game is a *Scramble* derivative and has five stages: take off, the sea, the hills, the town and landing.

Take off is from an aircraft carrier on the sea, in a Sea Harrier. It is a medium-length flight. This brings you over an enemy destroyer, which fires a guided missile. A pull back on the joystick skims the Harrier over the naturally green hills – only to run the gauntlet of flak from land-based tanks and artillery.

After seemingly limitless rows of hills, the houses and factories of a town appear. Of course, they still have the destructive blanket of flak.

Above the town, you cannot miss with your low-power bombs. But with this temptation they are soon exhausted. Soon you reach the end of this massacre and fly over the port's pier.

Here another defending ship fires its surprise cargo. Then it's back to the ship and the easy task to land. Unfortunately, it is not that easy. You are perpetually under attack from enemy jet aircraft which you must shoot out of the sky before they do you. Also, you have only one life!

The keys add to the difficulty. All are in a row – six of them. There is an attractive, but rather useless eject display provided.

The game uses fast graphics and a flicker-free scrolling display. There is an extensive high-score table with names of six letters each. At the base of the screen are four gauges showing bombs, rockets, fuel and speed. The usage ratio of speed to fuel is opposite seventy natural – the faster the aircraft travels the less fuel is used per mile.

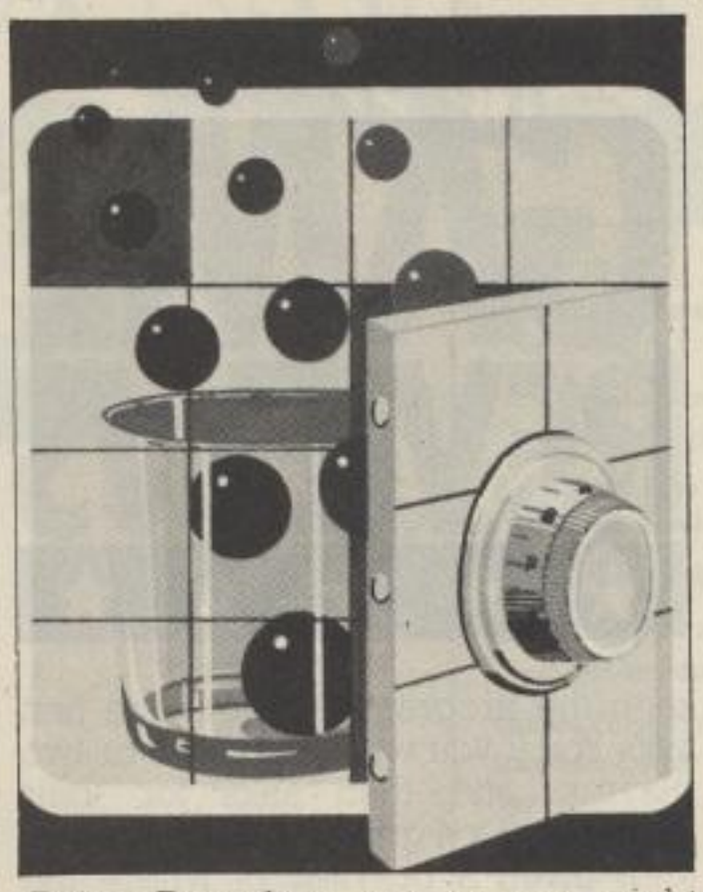
The game is made so that the player has to travel at a certain speed (or higher) to finish the game. The more you accelerate the faster the action is. The gauges flash if one of the stores (bombs, rockets or fuel) are exhausted. The game has five levels and each increases the speed of the action.

This game was released after the Falklands crisis, and the game does simulate flying over an island port. I'll let you draw your own conclusions about that.

Anthony Ackroyd

Value: 3.5
Graphics: 3
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



RAINY DAY
Machine: Spectrum 48k
Supplier: Charlie Charlie Sugar
Price: £2.99
Type of game: skill/mind

Rainy Day does not, as you might imagine, place you in the position of dodging lethal raindrops. Neither does it have you zapping everything that moves on the screen. There is not an alien in sight! Instead, *Rainy Day* presents you with a trio of puzzles to occupy your mind when you have nothing else better to do – such as on a rainy day.

Two of the three puzzles are video versions of the code game *Mastermind* and the ancient sliding block puzzle. The third simply tests your reactions to visual movement.

Codebreaker challenges you to crack the numeric safe code, against the clock and fifteen attempts. There are three difficulty levels. After each attempt, you are informed of the number of correct digits which are in the correct position, and the number of correct digits which are not in the correct position.

The sliding block puzzle allows you to choose from a number of dissected diagrams. Once you have chosen one, you must manipulate the piece to produce a complete picture. This is achieved by sliding the individual blocks around the grid, from which one block has been removed. To help you, a completed puzzle is shown on the left-hand side of the screen.

Finally, *Reaction Tester* shows a ball at the top of the screen. The idea is for you to press a key as soon as you see the ball move downwards. After each attempt you are given a performance rating, and the drop time is displayed in hundredths of a second.

Rainy Day is reasonably priced and makes a refreshing change to the nth rip off of *Pac-man*. The program is compatible with a number of joystick interfaces and the Currah speech unit.

David Liddle

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 2.5

DECOR WRECKERS
Machine: Spectrum 48k (Kempston option)
Supplier: Scorpio Software
Price: £1.99
Type of game: skill

I was sceptical of this game for two reasons. I had not come across the software company before, and at £1.99 I did not think the game would be up to much. But on loading I was pleasantly surprised.

The idea of the game is simply to fill the whole of the screen with paint. Not as easy as it sounds! Sid Spider, Freddie Fly, Bertie Bug and Sammy Snail all join forces to stop you fulfilling your mission.

The paint roller you control is easy to manoeuvre using the keyboard and – even easier – using a joystick.

You must complete your mission before either your paint or bonus score run out.

The graphics are simple but effective, and the sound effects are adequate. This is a good game to play on a monochrome TV as the contrasting colours are easy to pick out.

I found only one real fault with this game and that is the documentation provided – or rather, not provided. Most of the instructions on the inlay concern the loading procedure and a copyright warning.

This is a fun but challenging game with a lasting appeal. And it's better than some game at three times the price.

First class value for money.

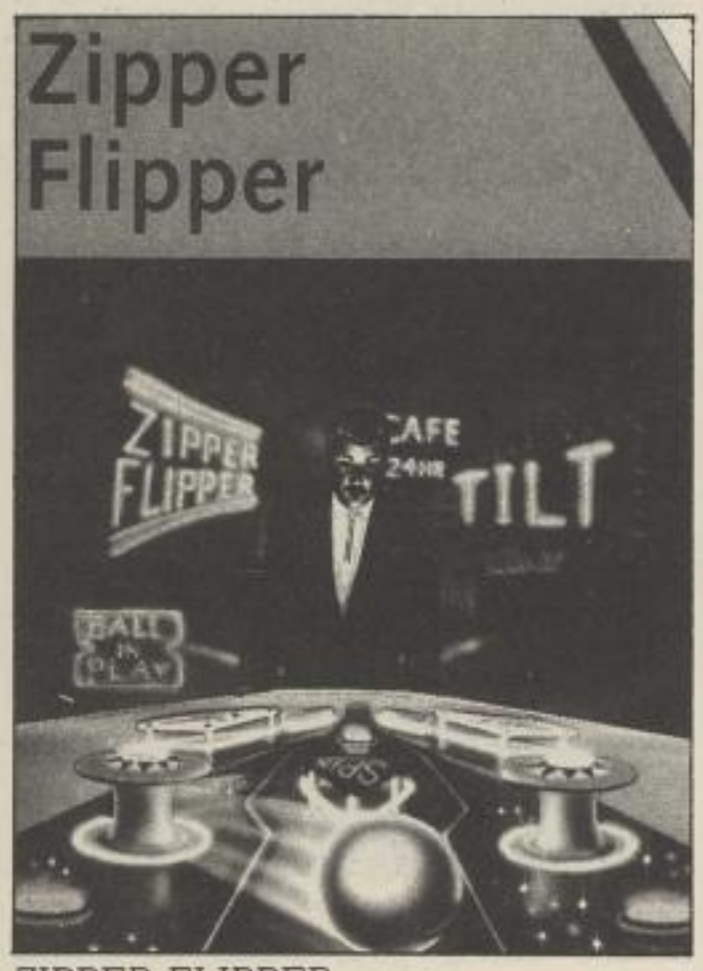
Gary Buss

Value: 4.5
Graphics: 2.5
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 2.5

October GAME REVIEWS

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Zipper Flipper



ZIPPER FLIPPER
Machine: 48k ZX Spectrum
Supplier: Sinclair
Price: £5.95
Type of game: simulation/skill

As the title suggests, *Zipper Flipper* is a pinball game – with a fruit machine incorporated. This may seem strange as you cannot tilt your Spectrum, nor will you find coins pouring from your TV. Yet the game works well.

The object is to knock out the coloured blocks on the right of the screen to get to the fruit machine stems. When the ball hits one of these, you have the chance to nudge the fruits and score extra points.

The game starts with a menu screen giving a wide range of choices, including a demo or competition mode. Press the play button and it's flippers at the ready!

You have five balls, and the standard two flippers to control. The keys are well laid out and the game also works with the ZX Interface II.

An extra ball is given at 10,000 points. But you'll need a lot of practise before you get that!

Zipper Flipper is a colourful, well-presented game with realistic ball movement – but it doesn't beat the real thing!

Diana Theodosiou

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MATCHING PAIRS
Machine: Spectrum (48k)
Supplier: Case's Computer Simulations
Price: £2.95
Type of game: skill/memory

This game is reminiscent of the Pick a Pair game in the BBC programme *The Saturday Morning Picture Show*.

For those gamers who haven't seen the programme, the game first asks you if you would like one or two players, and then asks for their names. A 6 x 4 grid is drawn. You are then given a preview of where the blocks are.

This progresses through five levels of difficulty. When the game is over, you are given a score, and a tune is played.

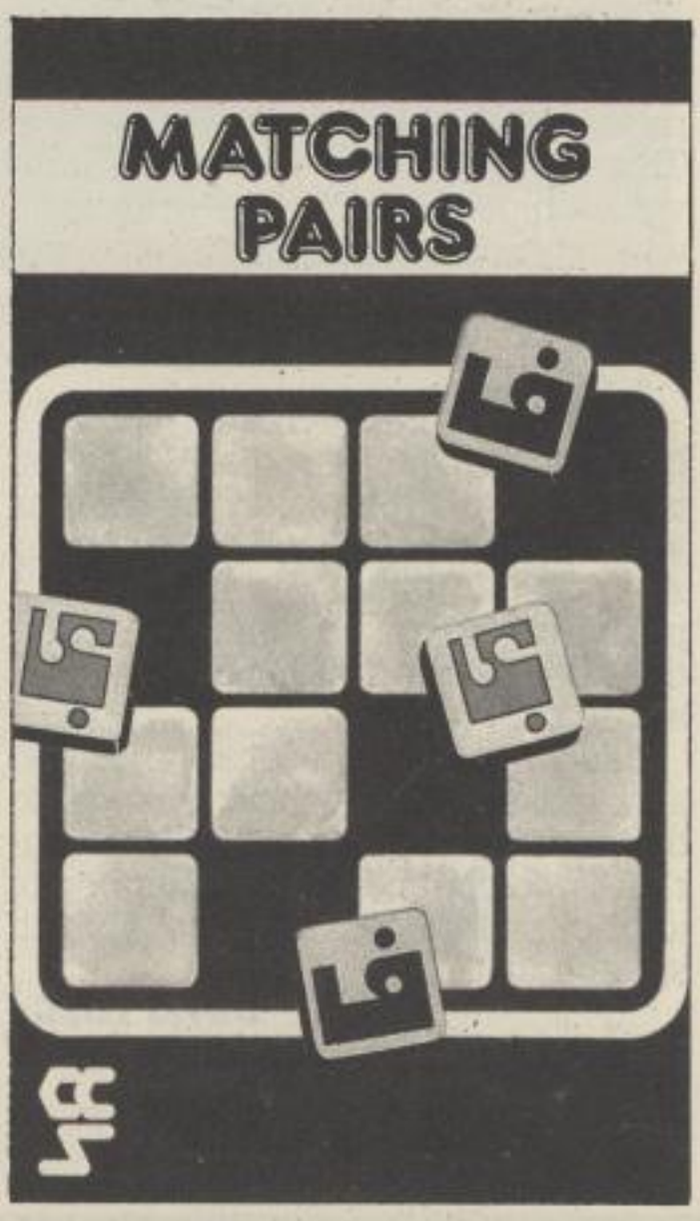
The major disadvantage of this game is that it is written in Basic and so it can be broken into. The limit of guesses, which should be thirty, can be altered.

The graphics were also a disappointment. The front cover shows little pictures. But when the game starts, there are just blocks and triangles. In round one, only colours have to be matched, a major disadvantage on a black and white television monitor.

This game may be all right for younger gamers.

Lee Braithwaite

Value: 2
Graphics: 1
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 1.5



TREASURE OF TARMIN
Machine: Intellivision
Supplier: Mastergame
Price: N/A
Type of game: maze

This advanced Dragons & Dungeons game from Intellivision's new distributor was worth the wait.

The plot revolves around the dreaded minotaur and his monster mates who have built mazes and dungeons on the island of Tarmin to hide the Great Treasure of the dark ages. They also hold other stolen riches, objects of spiritual power, and weapons.

Your task is to find the Great Treasure, collecting as many points as you can. These come from warlike, spiritual or mixed actions – and 'eyeball murals' will tell you which of these three types of maze you're in.

You will travel through gates, ladders and hidden doors. Monsters appear – of course – to block your way. But they wait until you get close before they attack, so you've plenty of time to plan your move.

An overlay for the Intellivision numeric hand controller comes with this game. Reading from 1 to 12, these functions change to pick up/drop, swap hands, rotate pack, open, use, swap pack, attack, rest, use ladder, glance left, retreat/retrace and glance right. The side buttons show the castle map with your position, food count and arrow count.

Some of these may seem confusing at first. But it's simple: your pack can hold only six objects, your hands two, and the weapon is thrown from your right hand only. So if you need to, say, throw a particular weapon, you may need to rotate the pack until the weapon is to hand, take it out with your left hand, then swap hands.

There are four levels of play in *The Treasure of Tarmin*: easiest, easy, medium and hard. It's best to start at the easiest – there are 256 levels of mazes!

The graphics in this game are simple, consisting mainly of chunks of green walls and blue doors. The addictive quality comes from the sheer frustration of trying to get close to that treasure.

Deirdre Boyd

Value: (price not decided)
Graphics: 2.5
Sound: –
Gameplay: 4

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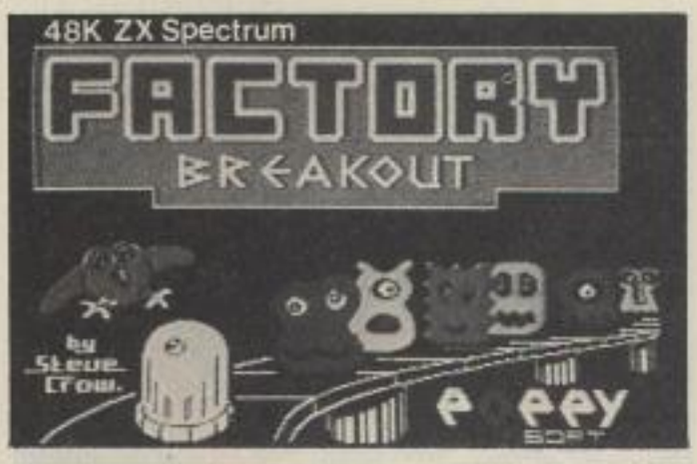


FACTORY BREAKOUT
Machine: Spectrum 48k
Supplier: Poppy Soft
Price: £4.95
Type of game: skill

Factory Breakout is yet another version of the "you against four million crazed aliens scenario". You are Zirky, the last robot of the once thriving community of robots on the planet Xial. This was all but annihilated by alien monsters who have now put you on their top-priority hit list.

This being a 48k program, I was disappointed to see that Poppy Soft was unable to fit in so little diversity: only three screens.

The first is quite intriguing. Zirky is struggling to hatch from his formation egg, and defend himself from alien projectiles.

The second screen has highly commendable graphics, but is boring.

The third is an interesting version of a vertical maze *Pac-man*. It is the best part of the whole program.

On the whole, the gameplay is uninspiring. This is a great disappointment, because the programming is excellent as are the graphics.

Matthew Jarvis

Value: 2
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 1

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

RUBY RUNABOUT
Machine: ZX Spectrum 48k
Supplier: Scorpio Software
Price: £1.99
Type of game: adventure

Reggie is a ruby robber. He has his eyes set on the Rocksalmon ruby, the most priceless gem in the world.

Reggie runs the local garage, when he's not busy thieving. That's where the adventure begins: at the petrol pumps. You play the role of Reggie, trying to steal the ruby from its sanctuary and returning to your garage hideout.

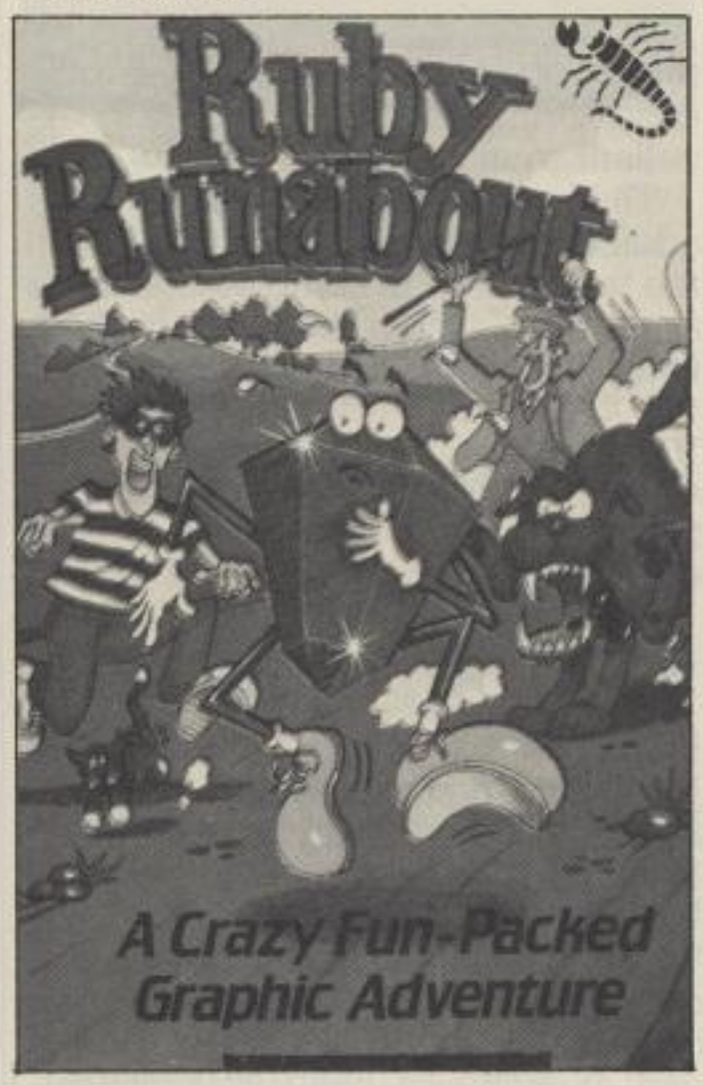
The adventure has forty locations, twenty of which have graphic illustrations showing the various locations. Using your imagination – and sense of humour – survive the perilous journey to locate and remove the Rocksalmon ruby.

The program uses most verbs commonly used in adventures, such as north, south, take, drop and examine. The game also has a percentage score showing how far you have got. You can also save the variables to resume another time.

It's easy, but takes a bit of thinking about to finish. The illustrations are good, simple and clear. The response is quick for Basic. Overall, an original idea.

Christopher Bullett

Value: 4
Graphic: 2
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 3



★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

DIX MILLE
Machine: 48k Spectrum
Supplier: Case's Computer Simulations
Price: £2.99
Type of game: dice

Dix Mille is a computerised dice game for one to six players. "The game is very simple but extremely addictive," the blurb says. Well, it is simple but I had trouble staying awake.

The computer rolls six dice for you. This is the best bit in the whole game; the dice roll on to the screen in semi-3D. You take any scoring dice away.

Scoring is as follows:
5=50
1=100
Three 1s=1000
123456=3000
Three pairs=1500
Three of a kind=100 x number
You can then throw any remaining dice or pass on to the next player.

Translated, *Dix Mille* means ten thousand. So the first person to reach 10,000 wins.

The player is also given the chance to play against the computer – which always wins. At the end of the game, you are given an optional report on the last game.

Dix Mille has to be the most boring game I have ever played. Avoid it.

Richard Henderson

Value: 1
Graphics: 1
Sound: –
Gameplay: 0.5

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

CRAZY CRANES
Machine: 16k Spectrum (Kempston joystick)
Supplier: Voyager
Price: £5.50
Type of game: skill

This game puts you at the controls of a dockyard crane. There is a good dockyard scene as the game loads. This takes about one minute. Using your electromagnet, you must transport various goods from the deck of a boat into an unloading bay at the base of the crane. These goods include helicopters, animal cages and ill-fated aliens. The movements are up, down, left and right. The keyboard control is very easy.

The second level introduces lethal arrows that are aimed at your magnet. Skill is required to dodge these and also pick up the goods. Sound is not very good, but the graphics are alright. Overall, *Crazy Cranes* is an original concept for beginners.

Gary Buss

Value: 2
Graphics: 3
Sound: 1
Gameplay: 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

WHO DUNNIT?
Machine: ZX Spectrum 48k
Supplier: Case Computer Simulations
Price: £2.99
Type of game: adventure

This game is from the new range of cheaper cassettes that are now becoming widely available for the Spectrum.

The game is a version of the classic board-game Cluedo. As you might expect, the game has only the "bare essentials", no graphics and average sound.

It gives a one to four player option and you can choose whether to omit the quiz which is incorporated in the game.

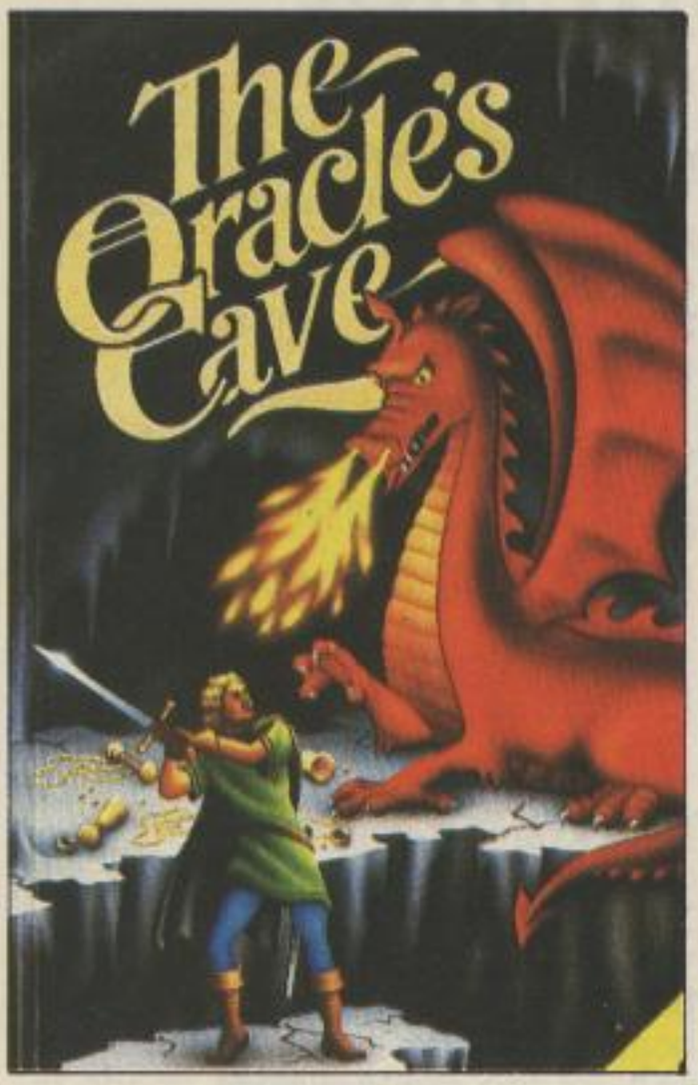
A series of facts are shown or you can ask a question. From this you eliminate suspects, work out who is the murderer, what weapon was used, etc.

The game is not hard to solve so didn't hold my attention.

Diana Theodosiou

Value: 2
Graphics: –
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 2

October GAME REVIEWS



THE ORACLE'S CAVE
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Dorcas Software
Price: £7.95
Type of game: adventure

This game has completely changed my preconceived ideas about graphic adventure games.

The idea of the game is to fulfil a quest set by you at the beginning of the adventure. This is done by selecting a creature from the list on the title page. Then you must at some stage obtain that creature's particular treasure. For example, the centaur guards a horseshoe, and the mummy a golden chalice.

You must also defeat the Oracle before the end of five days, which is shown by a time scale on the screen as the game proceeds. In actual time, the game takes a maximum of one hour, the average being about forty minutes.

You start at the first cave and are represented by an orange man. He makes his way through the cave system – which is different every game – killing the usual range of nasties such as ogres, dragons, and vampire bats, and collecting the usual treasures such as gold, and silver. There are also the usual artefacts like balm, potions, and magic rings, of which you are allowed to carry only three at any one time.

To successfully kill these nasties, you must maintain your energy and combat levels. This can be a bit monotonous as you have to rest rather a lot.

The Oracle's Cave is a good idea which has been made into an interesting game. The graphics depicting the adventurer and the monsters are ingenious. But the weapons and other objects are average and rather small. There is also limited use of colour. The game's major drawback is lack of sound. This is a great pity, considering the Commodore's excellent sound facility.

The game is good value, quite addictive, and easy to play although the task is hard to complete. Its other advantage is the turbo-loading which is useful in a program of this length.

Nicholas Lord

Value: 4
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: –
Gameplay: 4

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KALAH
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Talent Computer Systems
Price: £7.95 cassette; £9.95 disk
Type of game: strategy

This game, the insert states, is the oldest game in the world. It is played on a board with two rows of six pits and, at each end, two larger pits called kalahs.

The upper row is controlled by the computer, the lower by the player. Each owns the kalah on the right.

To start the game, each of the twelve pits is filled with an equal number of stones. You select the number of stones per pit, skill level, and whether you wish to move first, from the options on the screen.

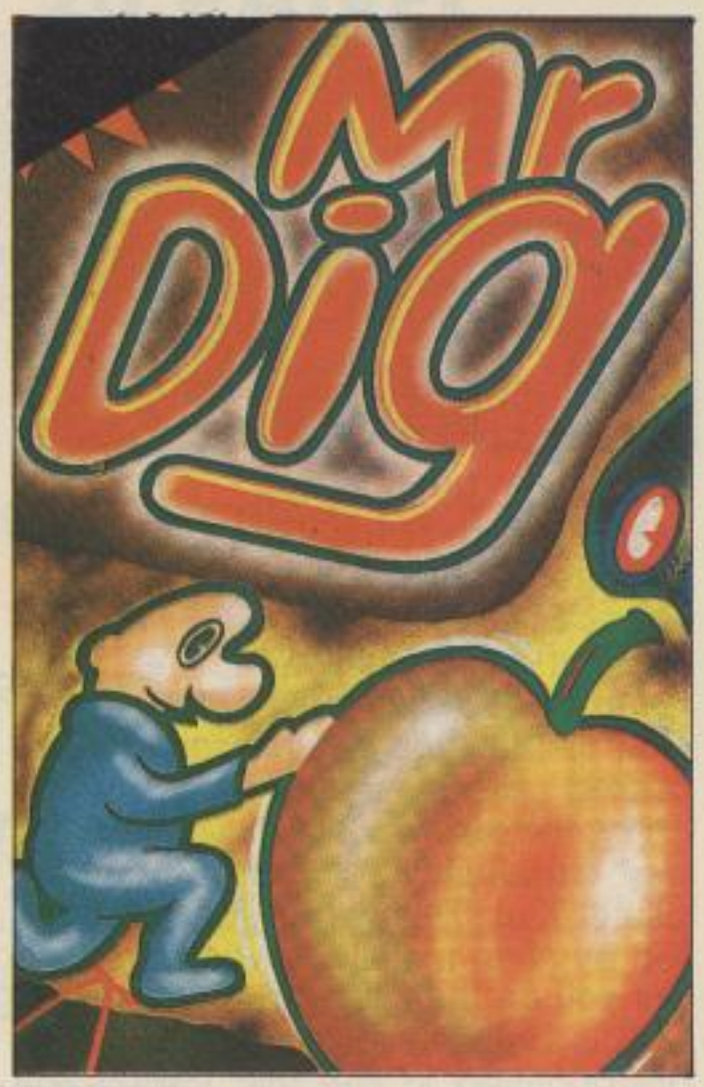
The pits are numbered one to six on each side, to identify moves which are controlled by those keys. To play, you choose a pit and distribute the stones from there, anticlockwise, around the board (including your own kalah, but not the computer's). You have one stone to each pit, until they run out. Play continues in turn, the object being to collect more than half the stones in your own kalah.

Clear instructions and onscreen rules make this game easy to learn. But skill and concentration are required to win.

I enjoyed playing this demanding game and recommend it to all those interested in games of stragegy.

Deborah Lander

Value: 4
Graphics: 3
Sound: 2.5
Gameplay: 4



MR DIG
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Microdeal
Price: £8.00
Type of game: skill

The arcade hit *Mr Do* is the basis of Microdeal's release – *Mr Dig* for the CBM 64.

The object of the game is to pick cherries from groves while avoiding the four meanies which chase you. The meanies are unable to dig tunnels or eat cherries. But if they become impatient of the chase, they'll mutate into tunnel diggin', cherry eatin' miners.

Picking the treat from the centre of the screen causes the meanies/miners to freeze and three maulers and a letter monster to take up the chase. Upon killing the letter monster you get the letter displayed on its chest. If you manage to spell the word EXTRA, you receive a bonus man.

The killing of the various nasties is done by launching your power orb (a sort of ball that ricochets around the screen) and hopefully hitting something. Or you can squash them with an apple that has either been pushed over a vertical tunnel or has had the ground dug out from beneath it. If you use the latter method, be careful to move from beneath the descending apple fast – otherwise you'll get to know how Isaac Newton discovered gravity.

The game is played with either a joystick or the keyboard and has ten skill levels ranging from baby to masochist. Pause and abandon current game options are also available.

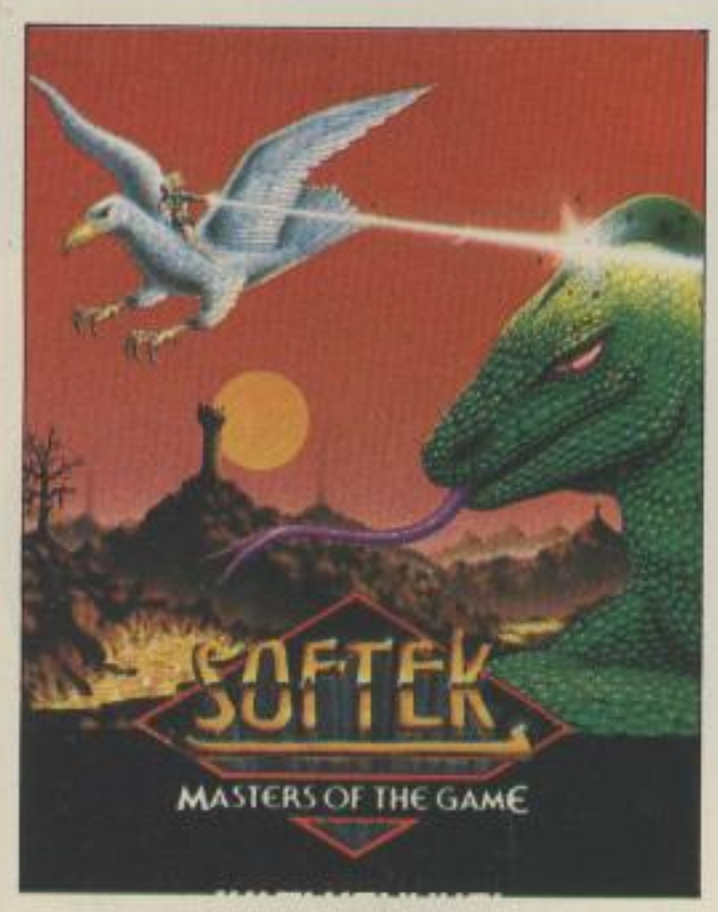
Grant Adamson

Value: 3
Graphics: 3
Sound: 4
Gameplay: 4
Arcade: 3

REVELATION
Machine: Commodore 64 (joystick essential)
Supplier: Softek
Price: £7.95
Type of game: fantasy shoot 'em up
This game is set in hell, of all places. The object is to prevent the monster of the Apocalypse from being crowned. This is achieved by fighting your way through over forty caverns.

You sit on the back of a sacred eagle, and hold your trusty magic staff as a weapon. In each cavern there are nine castle towers which must be destroyed, revealing the pentangle hidden in each.

In addition, there are over thirty-one types of monsters, which come at different levels of the game. These can be totally destroyed only when the towers in each cavern have been destroyed. Other dangers come in the form of trees and lava pits which



cause death if touched.

You can start the game at four different levels. Another interesting option that this game offers is a game where the fire button must be pressed to keep flying. In a normal game, the eagle keeps flying and the joystick is used only for movement.

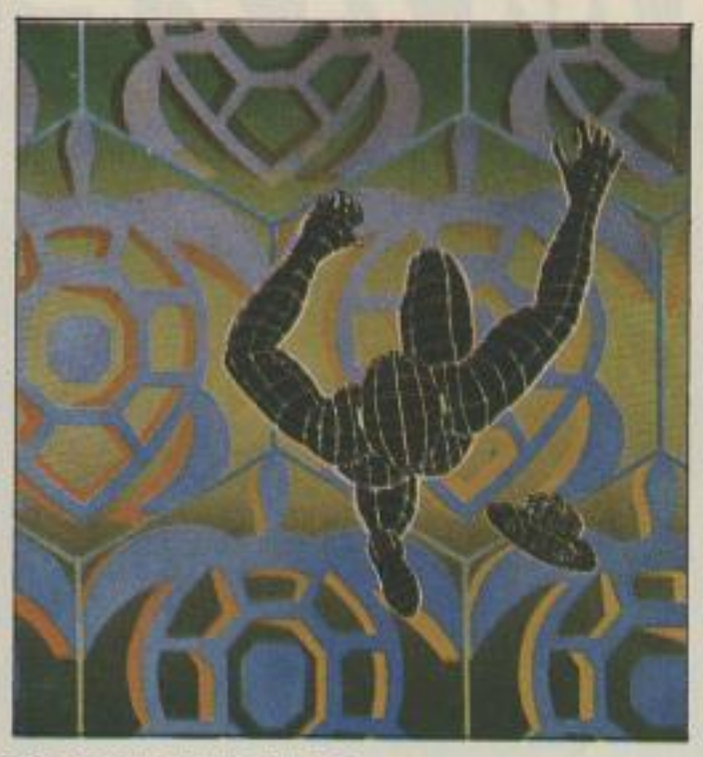
The graphics in the game are very well defined, the bubbling lava being especially good. The sound is acceptable, even though it is a bit repetitive. The game is fairly difficult to master, and it would take an extremely long time to complete all of the caverns.

The only thing that I can find wrong with this game is the quarter of an hour that it takes to load – but this is a fault of the Commodore 64 not the game itself.

All in all, *Revelation* is an enjoyable game.

Mark Frary

Value: 3
Graphics: 4
Sound: 2
Gameplay: 3



PURPLE TURTLES
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Quicksilva
Price: £7.95
Type of game: skill
Any game that describes itself as "cuddly, cute and lovable" has to be approached with a measure of suspicion. After all, if you wanted a teddy bear, you wouldn't have bought a computer game in the first place!

After a lengthy interval, however, the game reveals itself as a rather simple idea. This is to guide the little character across a river to collect fruit by jumping from the back of one turtle to another. The only problem is that the turtles have a nasty habit of sinking without warning, dropping you with a resounding splash into the river.

It's easy to beat the game at first. But the nice thing about it is that there are ten skill levels and ten speed settings, any combination of which can be used.

At high levels, you can find yourself standing on a turtle in midstream. You know that it's about to sink, and realise with a sickening feeling of doom that all its mates have decided to do their famous impression of a lead weight at the same time.

Also, if you've set the speed so fast that you don't have time to jump off when your turtle begins to sink, you don't stand a chance. So start slow!

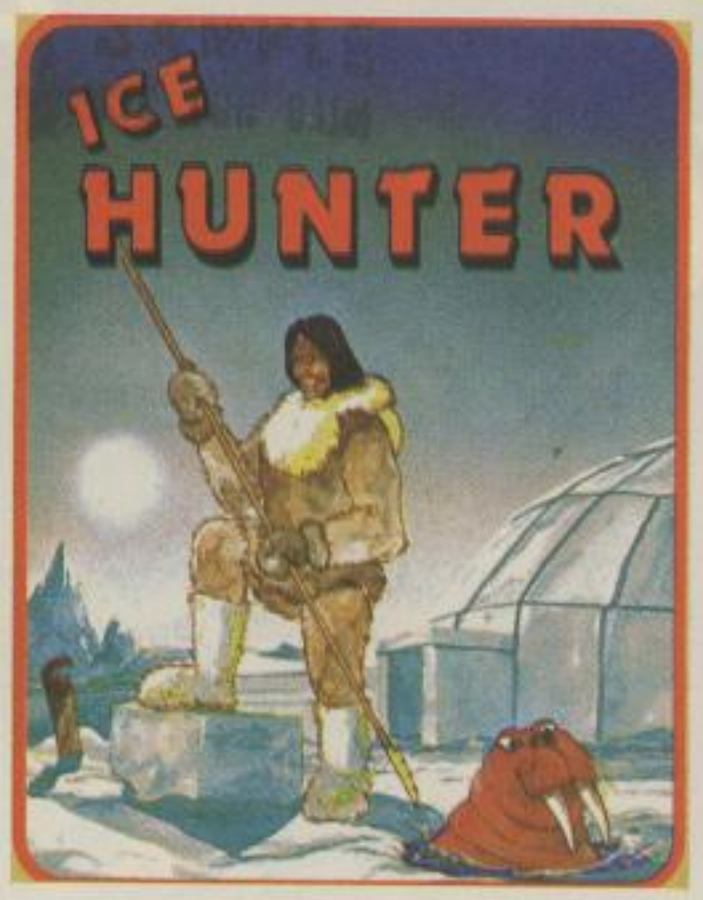
Pretty graphics and a catch rendition of *Messing About on the River* complete the attraction of this game.

David Bogod

Value: 3
Graphics: 4
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 3

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

ICE HUNTER
Machine: Commodore 64 (+ joystick)
Supplier: Anirog Software
Price: £6.90
Type of game: platform
Credit where credit's due. Anirog is pretty consistent in producing top-quality software for the CBM 64 and



this latest offering is no exception.

The game turbo-loads in eighty seconds. Joystick plugged in and you're away.

The object of the game is to guide Thorak, prince of ice through a system of scrolling caverns, moving ice blocks from the uppermost level to the underground stream at the foot of the screen. This is achieved by dropping the blocks through gaps in the platform while avoiding dragons, birds and sealions.

The sound is acceptable, and the graphics nice – the second screen is brilliant. The game is not exceptional, but it is most certainly fun and very playable.

Sean Maddalena

Value: 4
Graphics: 3.5
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 3

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ARCHIPELAGO
Machine: Commodore 64
Supplier: Talent Computer Systems
Price: £7.95 cassette; £9.95 disk
Type of game: maze
In this extremely addictive game, you take the part of a survivor of the wrecked airship Hesperus.

After a stunning, animated opening sequence and an equally stunning rendering of Rimsky Korsakov's *Flight of the Bumble Bee*, the game begins. The screen goes black and a fairly complex maze is promptly drawn. Five jewels and a number of highly intelligent, fast spiders are then dotted around the maze at random. Your task is to collect the jewels which will open the gateway to the next level, while avoiding or shooting the nasties with your 'primitive energy laser' with limited fire.

Gary Anderson

Value: 3
Graphics: 2
Sound: 3
Gameplay: 4

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from Consumer Electronics.

As monitored by *TV Gamer* readers

TOP 20 video and computer games

POSITION	NAME	MANUFACTURER	SYSTEMS
1 (4)	JET SET WILLY	(Software Projects)	c, j
2 (2)	ZAXXON	(CBS/Datasoft)	b, c, f, g, j, n
3 (3)	PITFALL	(Activision)	b, c, f, g, n
4 (1)	RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK	(Atari)	n
5 (5)	POLE POSITION	(Atari)	a, c, f, j, n
6 (—)	FIGHTER PILOT	(Digital Integration)	j
7 (8)	PITFALL II	(Activision)	n
8 (7)	DECATHLON	(Activision)	c, n
9 (6)	RIVER RAID	(Activision)	b, f, g, j, n
10 (9)	DONKEY KONG	(CBS/Atari)	b, f, g, n
11 (10)	BURGER TIME	(Mattel)	g
12 (—)	LORDS OF MIDNIGHT	(Beyond)	c, j
13 (—)	FULL THROTTLE	(Micromega)	j
14 (16)	MR DO	(CBS Electronics)	b, n
15 (13)	Q*BERT	(Activision)	b, f, g, n
16 (—)	MANIC MINER	(Bug-Byte)	j
17 (15)	ENDURO	(Activision)	n
18 (11)	POPEYE	(Parker)	b, f, g, n
19 (12)	ATIC ATAC	(Ultimate)	j
20 (14)	THE HOBBIT	(Melbourne House)	a, j

*Numbers in brackets indicate last month's position

a Acorn BBC Computer b CBS Colecovision/Adam c Commodore 64 d Dragon e Acorn Electron f Atari 400/800 Computers (usually fits XLs) g Intellivision h Oric-1/Atmos i Philips 67000 j Spectrum k Sharp 700 Series (usually fits MZ80 A/K) l TRS 80 Series/Colour Genie m Texas Instruments T199/4A n Atari 2600 VCS o Vectrex p Commodore VIC 20

...and the Top 10 arcade games

1 (1)	STAR WARS	(Atari)	
2 (3)	TRACK & FIELD	(Konami/Kaito)	
3 (2)	DRAGON'S LAIR	(Cinematronics)	
4 (4)	POLE POSITION	(Atari/Namco)	
5 (9)	M.A.C.H. 3	(Mylstar)	
6 (—)	ASTRON BELT	(Sega)	
7 (5)	BUCK ROGERS	(Sega)	
8 (7)	DONKEY KONG	(Atari)	
9 (6)	MR DO	(Universal)	
10 (8)	FIREFOX	(Atari)	

Last month's winner: Wai-Leung Tang, Lancing, West Sussex

TOP SCORE

1	(4)	**JET SET WILLY** (Software Projects)	**83 objects** Ross Coleman/Cameron Else
2	(2)	**ZAXXON** (TVG claimed)	**2,319,000** Jason Brown
3	(3)	**PITFALL** (Activision)	**114,000** David Rose/Richard Varnie
4	(1)	**RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (TVG claimed)	**25 points** Brian Bell
5	(5)	**POLE POSITION** (TVG claimed)	**106,800** Adrian Bunting
6	(–)	**FIGHTER PILOT** (Digital Integration)	no claim made
7	(8)	**PITFALL II** (TVG claimed)	**199,000** Gavin Disney
8	(7)	**DECATHLON** (Activision)	**10,078** Mark Riley
9	(6)	**RIVER RAID** (Activision)	**1,000,000** Gavin Davidson
10	(9)	**DONKEY KONG** (TVG claimed)	**8,796,600** Jason Brown
11	(10)	**BURGER TIME** (TVG proven)	**235,600** A. Collins
12	(–)	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** (TVG claimed)	Mike Johnson
13	(–)	**FULL THROTTLE** (Micromega)	no claim made
14	(16)	**MR DO** (TVG claimed)	**1,242,450** Kevin Rustill
15	(13)	**Q*BERT** (TVG claimed)	**4,112,480** Jason Brown
16	(–)	**MANIC MINER** (TVG claimed)	**3,140,777** Mark Bishop
17	(15)	**ENDURO** (TVG proven)	**47 days** Paul Boselli
18	(11)	**POPEYE** (TVG claimed)	**427,550** Frederic Kirk
19	(12)	**ATIC ATAC** (Ultimate)	no claim made
20	(14)	**THE HOBBIT** (Melbourne House)	no claim made

TV Gamer invites readers to send in their high scores for any screen game. A ***claimed*** score merely needs to state your name, game title, system (eg Atari home computer system, Spectrum, VCS, etc) and claimed score.

A ***proven*** score will require photographic evidence, but will take precedence over previous claimed scores. We suggest using a SLR auto-exposure camera on a tripod with cable release, timed at 1/4 second. Games which can be "clocked" (ie the score reaches a maximum and then returns to zero) will count only as claimed scores. Additionally, games which present short-cuts to high scoring (eg ***Space Invaders***, which can be made to shoot two missiles at a time) will also only be accepted as claimed scores.

Send your scores to *TV Gamer, Top Score Desk, 187 Oxford Street, London W1.*

Greetings, gamers! Stand by for another stack of wondrous letters from the mail bags of TVG.

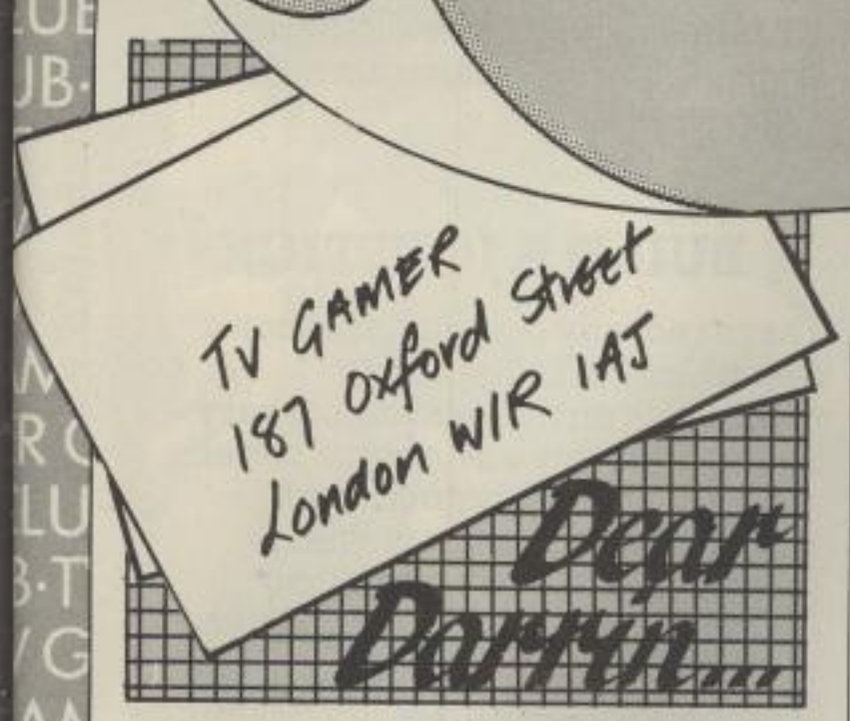
Things seem a bit grim for Atari owners, especially as the 7800 has been shelved. Do you think that Atari made a wise move in shelving the ProSystem? Or do you think that there was enough people in the UK and Europe to justify the launch of a new games system? Personally I feel that it's a bit of a shame that several of the games, such as Galaga and Xevious, scheduled for 7800 release will probably not see the light of day for quite a while. This leaves the way wide open for other manufacturers to produce rip off versions for the various systems. Is there anything that you would like to say to Mr Tramiel in reply to his opening moves as head of Atari Corporation? Tell us so that we can tell the world what gamers think on the current state of play.

On a lighter note, this month we see the first of a series of TVG Club competitions which are open to all readers of the club pages. The first of these features is the entertaining *Games Video* starring Chris Tarrant. You may remember Chris wrote about his experiences on making the video back in our June issue. Now he's offering fifty cassettes to our readers. All you have to do to get one of these is think of a witty caption to go with the picture on the competition page.

Did you hear all the fuss on the news a few months back concerning under 18s and arcades? Do you think that coin-ops are leading you into a life of crime? Are you being approached by unsavoury types while playing *Sinistar*? Or do you think that UK arcades should resemble US arcades which are more like recreation centres for all the family? I'd like to hear your opinions on this subject (usual address).

With that, I bid you farewell until next month. . .

Darrin Williamson



MATCHING UP TO COMMODORE

I am the proud owner of a Commodore 64. After playing quite a few games on it, I have come to the conclusion that most games are not complex enough to match the machine's capability. This is very infuriating, as all gamers naturally want to get the most out of their computers.

Please could you tell me of a *Miner 2049er*-type game for the 64, so that I can purchase it before I waste all my money on undeserving games.

Alasdair J Gilmour, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancs

Your problem's already solved. Just turn to page 22 for TVG's favourites.

SPIDERS vs CENTIPEDES

I am thinking of buying *Spider Fighter* by Activision – which is the equivalent of *Centipede* and *Millipede*. Is *Spider Fighter* as good as, or better than, *Centipede*?

I would prefer to buy *Spider Fighter* as Silica Shop offers a free cartridge – for instance *Pitfall* – with it.

Please could you tell me whether I am better going for *Millipede* and improved game play, missing the free cartridge offer?

Jeremy Young

Spider Fighter isn't really that similar to Centipede. So if it's a Centipede/Millipede game you're really after, then you'd better go for Millipede. But if you're not that bothered about your game being totally faithful to the coin-op, then by all means go for Silica's cart offer. I hope that's not confused you more!

ONTO VIDEO?

Could you tell me if the following are going to be VCS carts: *Beauty and the Beast, Dracula, Ice Trek, Micro Surgeon, Swords and Serpents, Tropical Trouble, Happy Trails, Beamrider, Krull, Buck Rogers, Front Line*?

Alex Amuro, Maidstone, Kent

It's possible that a version of Buck Rogers may come out for the VCS. But none of the others are likely candidates for release, I'm afraid.

E & E MAIL ORDER

In answer to an article sent in by Timothy Findlay Coulson of Edinburgh, relating to E & E Enterprises, I felt I had to put pen to paper.

I can sympathise with Timothy for this misleading advertisement. But I would like to say that, as a member of this hire club for over a year, I would recommend it for an excellent service which is, in some ways, cheaper than others. Also, most of the new releases are at your disposal.

Taking this issue of false adverts a bit further, don't you think that quite a lot of adverts on games cartridges/cassettes are also misleading?

To round off, I would like to mention how much I enjoy reading such an excellent magazine. Every month gets better and better, in particular the in-depth reviews.

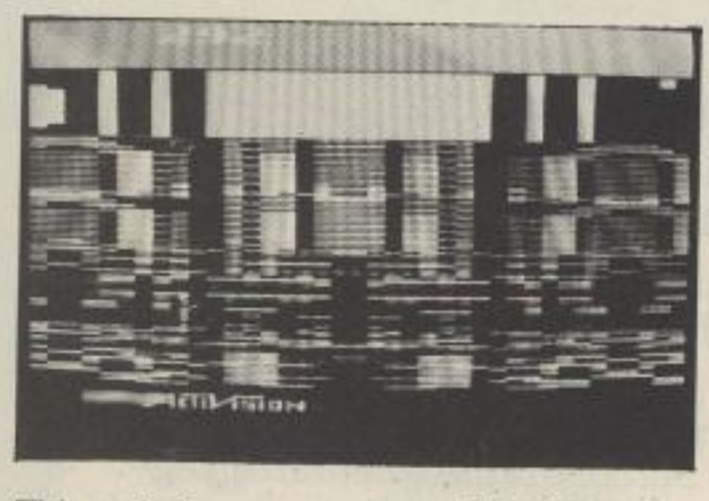
Alan Watkins, Clacton-on-Sea

In a letter to TVG, E & E Enterprises had the following to say.

"Mr Coulson quotes our advert in your Winter 1983 issue, which stated that we had no postage and packing charges. At the time of that ad, nine months or so ago, that was perfectly true. We were then charging 25p a day rental, for a minimum rental period of fourteen days, making a minimum charge of £3.50.

We wanted to find a way of making life easier on the pocket for our members, so we recently altered our charges to £1.00 per week hire plus £1.50 postage and packing, and reduced our minimum period to seven days. This means that one week's rental now costs £2.50, two weeks cost £3.50, three weeks £4.50, and four weeks £5.50.

Compare these charges with the Melrica Club, Mr Coulson, and you will find it charges, including postage, £2.10 for one week, £3.90 for two weeks, £5.70 for three weeks, and £5.80 for four weeks. We have many games that cost only 65p per week, or £2.15 inclusive. So we are charging 5p more than Melrica on one week's hire, and are considerably cheaper than it is for any rental lasting longer than one week. Hardly a 'very costly club'."



This weird room appears in Pitfall II *(VCS version). Harry is just visible in the lower left of the screen.*

QUICKSHOT HERO

Recently I purchased *Pitfall II* – and it's great! After many sleepless nights I finally completed it.

Even though I think it's rather good, David Crane could have made a better ending to it. All our intrepid Pitfall Harry does is to jump about, which I thought to be rather pathetic.

Can *H.E.R.O.* fit the Coleco, and does the Quickshot II fit Coleco?

Mark Renny,
Romford, Essex

A Colecovision version of H.E.R.O. will be out soon, and the Quickshot II does fit Coleco. But using it will make game selection a bit tricky.

NEW GAMES

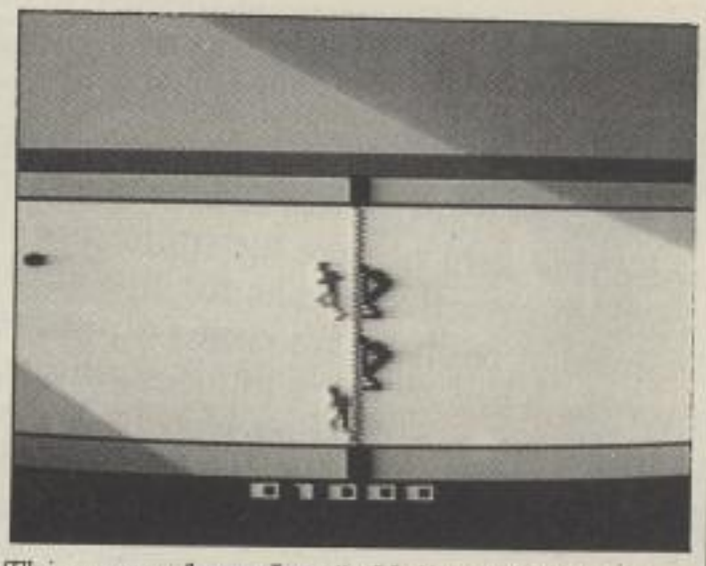
Are there any *Mr Do* or *Dig Dug*-type games for Intellivision?

Also, what new games have Imagic, Activision and Parker brought out for Intellivision?

PS Can you get *Miner 2049er* or any Tigervision game for Intellivision?

Lee Townsend

There are no games of this nature for the Intellivision and there are no new games from Activision, Parker or Imagic. It seems that they have lost interest in this system.



This scene from Atari's Volleyball *shows the computer team (on the right), with their heads stuck in the net – making the game rather easy for the human player.*

WHAT MICRO?

I have two big favours to ask of Darrin Williamson. First, where can I get the May issue of *TV Gamer*? I am going out of my mind playing Atari's *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Secondly, I am thinking of getting a home computer system but am baffled by the technical aspects such as RAM and ROM, hi-res, etc. The Spectravideo SV.328 looks good – but so does the Spectrum, the Atari and many others.

I would be grateful for any assistance.

Justin King,
Co. Galway, Ireland

You can obtain the issue(s) you need from our back numbers department. See the ad on page 55.

Much of the technical jargon used in computers isn't important to the games player. The best thing to do is to see all three micros running, and choose which one has the most games that appeal to you.

CLUBBING TOGETHER

'I wonder if you could help me with the following problem.

I joined the Atari Club way back in 1982. I got the newsletter and that was it. I've phoned and written, but have had no reply.

The same thing happened with Parker, except that I received no newsletter at all!

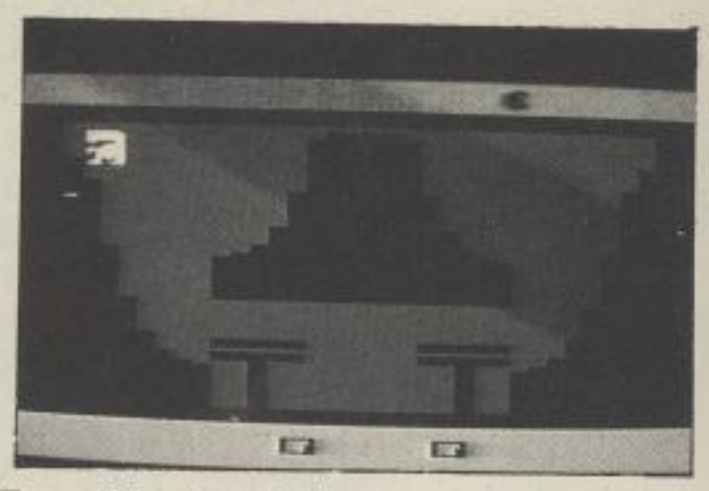
John Hawke,
Roy-Bridge, Scotland

Andrew Brunton, from Atari's marketing department, said it was likely that, because of the growing membership of the club, John's name could possibly have been missed from the list during mail.

Correspondence with club members is becoming a full time job in Atari. To make matters easier, members should always quote their membership numbers together with their full address.

So, John, if you would like to contact Andrew, quoting your membership number and full address, he will gladly try to trace your name on his list.

Parker spokesman Francis Rossati said that it, too, has hundreds of thousands of members, and John's name had probably fallen through the computer. But he would ensure John received acknowledgement if TVG sent the letter on to him. (Don't worry, John, it's on its way!)



Two of Spielberg's films come together in this scene from the semi-successful game ET. Here we see ET at Devil's Tower, the landing site for the mothership in Close Encounters.

BUILD A JOYSTICK

I have recently bought Activision's *Decathlon* cartridge. Using thejoystick on this game is not easy – so I made up my own control panel.

The control works out at little above the price of a new Atari joystick. If you carry on playing *Decathlon*, this is what you will need, anyway. The control consists of four buttons. Two are for the speed and the other two for fire – one for left-handed players and one for right-handers.

The control can also be used for all other horizontal games, such as *Galaxian and Space Invaders*.

If any readers are interested, I will be happy to forward information to them and explain how to interface the control to the VCS.

P A Bond,
Chilwell, Nottingham

If any other readers have constructed anything like that, then drop us the details.

GAMEPAWS APPEARS ON PAGE 66

The World's Greatest VIDEO GAMES COMPETITION

I'm sure you all know Chris Tarrant, most likely from ATV/Central's Saturday morning TV series, *Tiswas*. Recently, Chris turned his hand to video games, with the help of a promotional video for *TV Choice* magazine.

The video set out to explore the crazy world of computer games. Chris confessed to us that he was a bit bewildered by them. "I felt like Benny out of *Crossroads* put in charge of Mission Control Houston for a day!" Despite this, Chris flies through the video with flying colours.

All in all, twenty-one games are featured, including titles from well known games houses such as Software Projects and Parker.

The commentary combines with actual scenes from the games under scrutiny – very helpful if your local games shop doesn't let you test games on the premises. It guides you through some software for the Atari HCS, Spectrum, Oric/Atmos, Commodore and BBC. It also explains the differences between these micros, another very useful feature.

The video does have a drawback – getting outdated very quickly. But it is called the world's greatest, not the world's newest, games.

The World's Greatest Video Games, by TV Choice Video, can be rented from most good video stockists. Lasting thirty minutes, it runs on VHS and Beta formats. You can win your own copy in our easy-to-enter competition.

We have fifty videos, to be awarded to the fifty readers who come up with the funniest caption to the picture of Chris Tarrant below. So put down that joystick and start thinking of something funny.

My caption for Chris Tarrant's picture is:

.....

.....

Name .....

Address .....

.....

I wish to receive a VHS/Beta tape (delete as applicable)

To Competitions, TV Gamer, 187 Oxford Street, London W1R 1AJ

1. All entries received by the closing date, 26th October, will be examined and correct entries will be judged by representatives of both TV Gamer Club and TVC Ltd.
2. The prize will be awarded to the entrant who, in the opinion of the judges, writes the most appropriate caption.
3. The prizewinner will be notified by post, and details will be published in a forthcoming issue of TV Gamer.
4. All entries must be made on forms cut from TV Gamer. Photocopies are not acceptable.
5. The prize is to British TV standards, and operation cannot be guaranteed overseas.
6. The Editor's decision is final.

EASTER-EGGS

NO-BUG BUGBEAR

Reading the letter sent in by Michael Marshall, I was surprised to see that he had found a bug while trying to find the ark. When I tried it out on my *Raiders* cartridge, I discovered that it was not a bug, but the grappling hook. Since the hour-glass gives you a grappling hook as soon as you are on the mesa field, the computer gives you one.

The only trouble is that Indy does not have enough time to make use of it, so he gets stuck.

Steve Pearsall,
Great Barr, Birmingham

JETTING THROUGH

Here are some more tips to get through *Jet Set Willy* (TVG, August).

If you go to the bottom of the main staircase and type "writetyper", you go from screen to screen using the numbers.

You can get infinite lives by typing: MERGE"" «enter»: Play tape: When you get the OK message stop tape and type 35 POKE 35899,0 and delete line 11.

Grant Swan

ATtention!

I have found an egg on the support Starpath game, *Survival Island*, for the VCS.

Whilst walking around the temple maze in the third load, the amulet which I was carrying suddenly started flashing. So I moved forward, and hit the wall in front of me.

The screen turned black and the initials AT appeared in the centre of the screen. Could you please tell me what they stand for. I have found that these initials usually appear from the third maze onwards.

If necessary, I will be glad to send you a photo of the initials in the near future for proof.

Also on the same game, if you put the pause facility (right Diff. switch) on whilst putting in the second load, you will find that you have two men on the jungle scene at the same time after you stop the tape.

Dave Hampson,
Bootle, Merseyside

COMMUNISTS AND WHIPS

I would like to tell you about an easter egg my mum found on *Communist Mutants from Space*.

On game one she got 48,470 and twenty-two flags. At the end, instead of 'Hi' at the top, she got

Another egg, this time on *Raiders*, requires Quick Shot 2 joystick. Switch auto switch 'on' and pick up the whip. Go to the right border and whip it till you find yourself with a grappling hoom.

After reading Lee Hart's and Gus West's letter in the July edition, I thought I'd have a go at it. I got my parachute and whip and jumped off the top right-hand mesa, guiding Indy into the den. Quickly dropping the parachute, I whipped the wall and got the grappling hook; the sand didn't move. I then pressed my fire button and fell out of the den.

Steve Green,
Sinfin, Derby

STRIKE BACK!

In Dave Harvey's tips he forgot to mention something on *The Empire Strikes Back*. If you do as he says you will get more than five lives. But you will be on a much harder game speed, no matter what number you start on. Also, by trial and error, using the same method as Dave's you can get walkers – AT-ATs for the film buffs – on the scanner but not on the screen.

And did you know that *The Empire Strikes Back* has a continue option? Just press down game reset and game select and let them go at the same time (Dave's method's the same) at the end of the game. It usually takes only a few tries.

When the game starts you will have the same score as when your game finished. You will also have a lot of lives (the most lives I've got is twenty-three) but at a much faster speed, unless you were very good! You can do this until you're bored.

William Neil,
Ayr, Strathclyde

RISK TAKING

I am writing to inform you about some "eggs" I have found on my cartridges.

On *Frogger* for the Atari HCS, using different combinations of the game select and option keys can give you two Froggers on the screen at the same time.

Also, did you know that the extra room found by Dave Barry of Tottenham can be easily located by flicking the on/off switch? The same goes for the *Vanguard* photo and the high score on *Raiders*.

If you flick the on-off switch on *Adventure* you can get a rather large quantity of weird games – amongst other things.

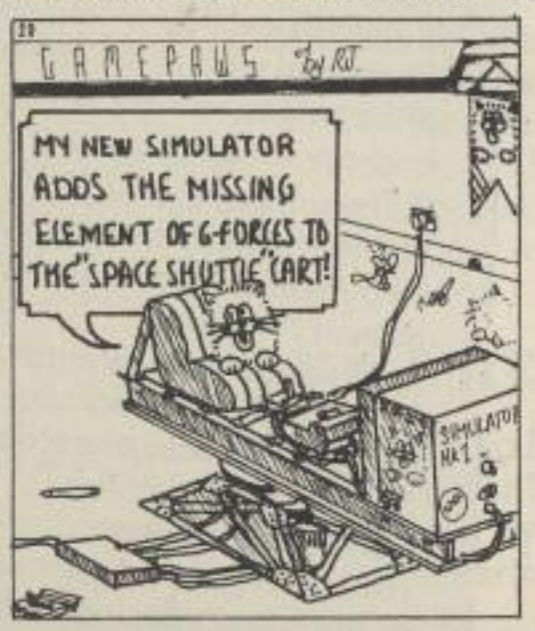
And on arcade *Ms Pac-Man* there is a certain pattern that allows you to run through the blue ghost.

It is possible to stay on the first screen of *Dig Dug* for ever, to slow down the action considerably on *Donkey Kong Junior*, and to slow down and stop the bugs from firing at you on *Galaga* – just thought you'd like to know that.

On *Bruce Lee* for Atari HCS, there is a rather special bug that allows you to get, say, at least eighty-three lives and a few million points – in about ten minutes!

Adrian Jones
Lanarkshire

Whew! We're surprised Adrian has a working machine left after all that on/off switching. Ed.



"I'll swap four of my tapes for your Activision."

You know the feeling. A couple of plays and the best you can hope for from so much of the software around, is swapping it for something better.

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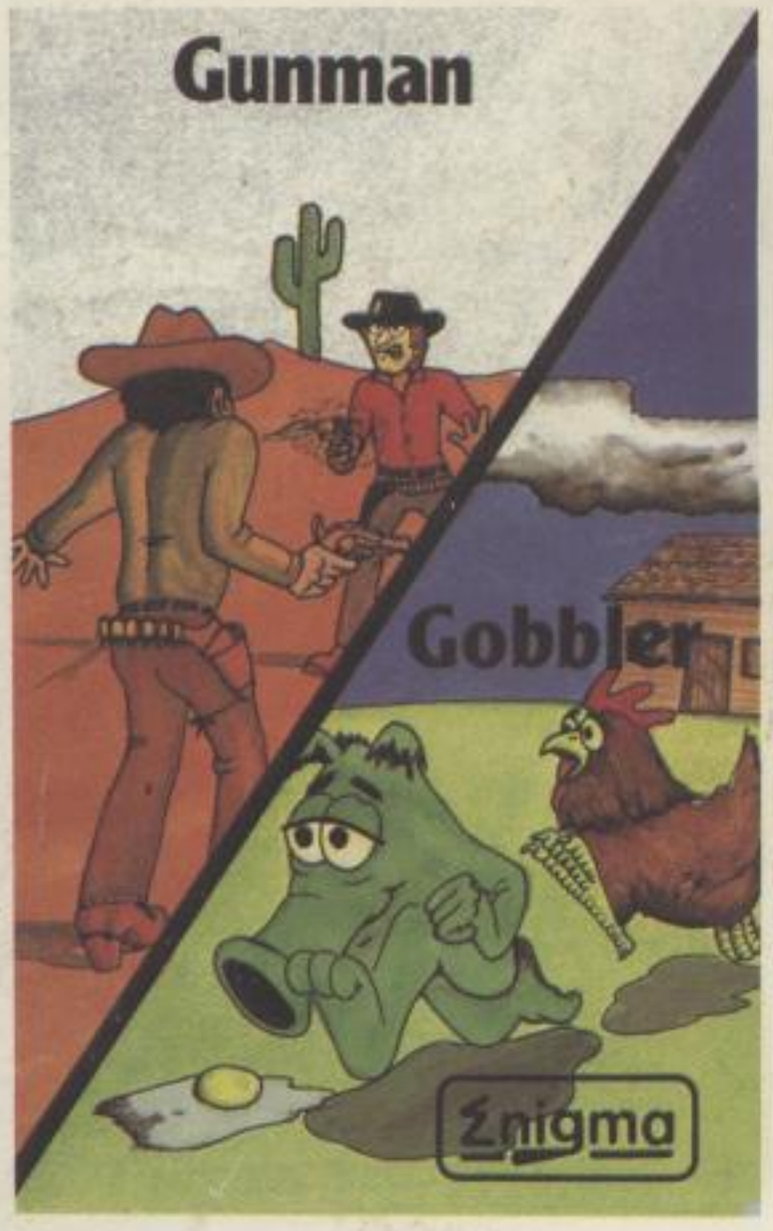
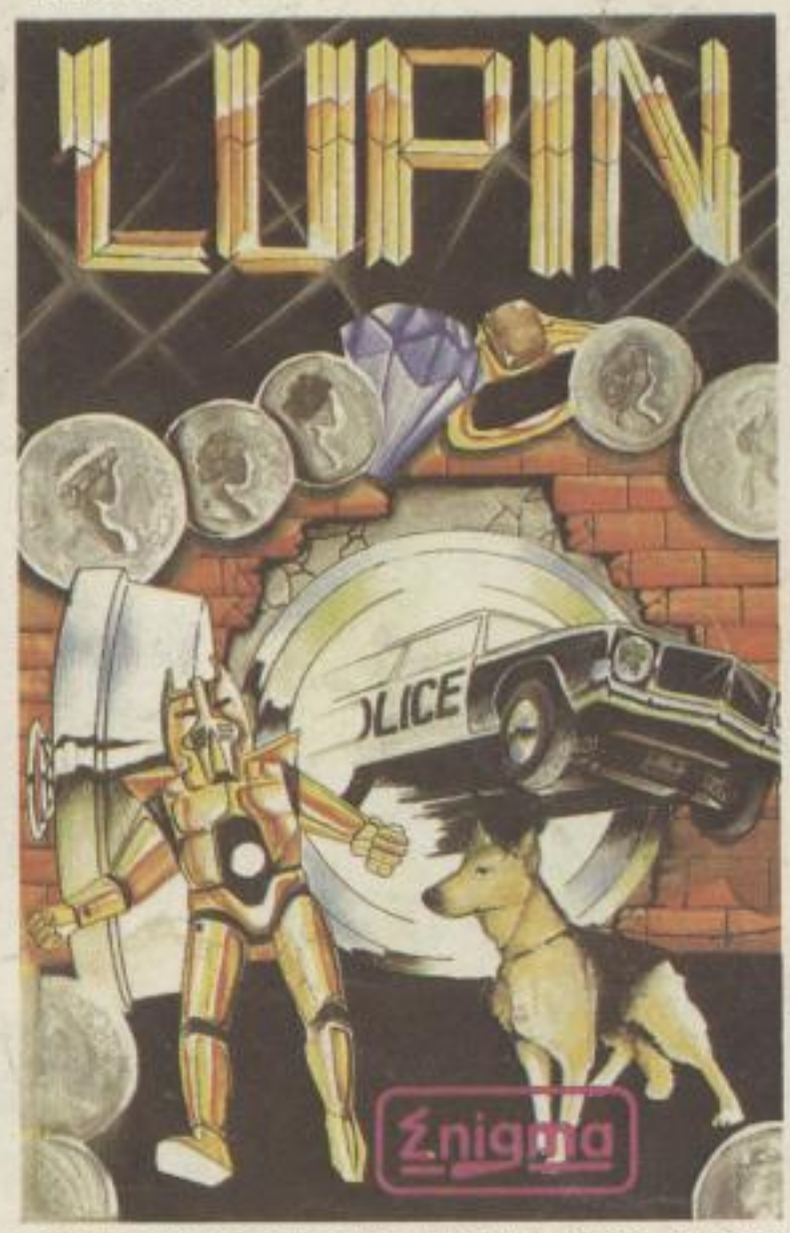
THE GAME £5.50
One of the fastest versions of this most popular arcade game with 8 levels of play. You need fast reactions and skill to escape from the ghosts in the maze. VIC20 and CBM64.

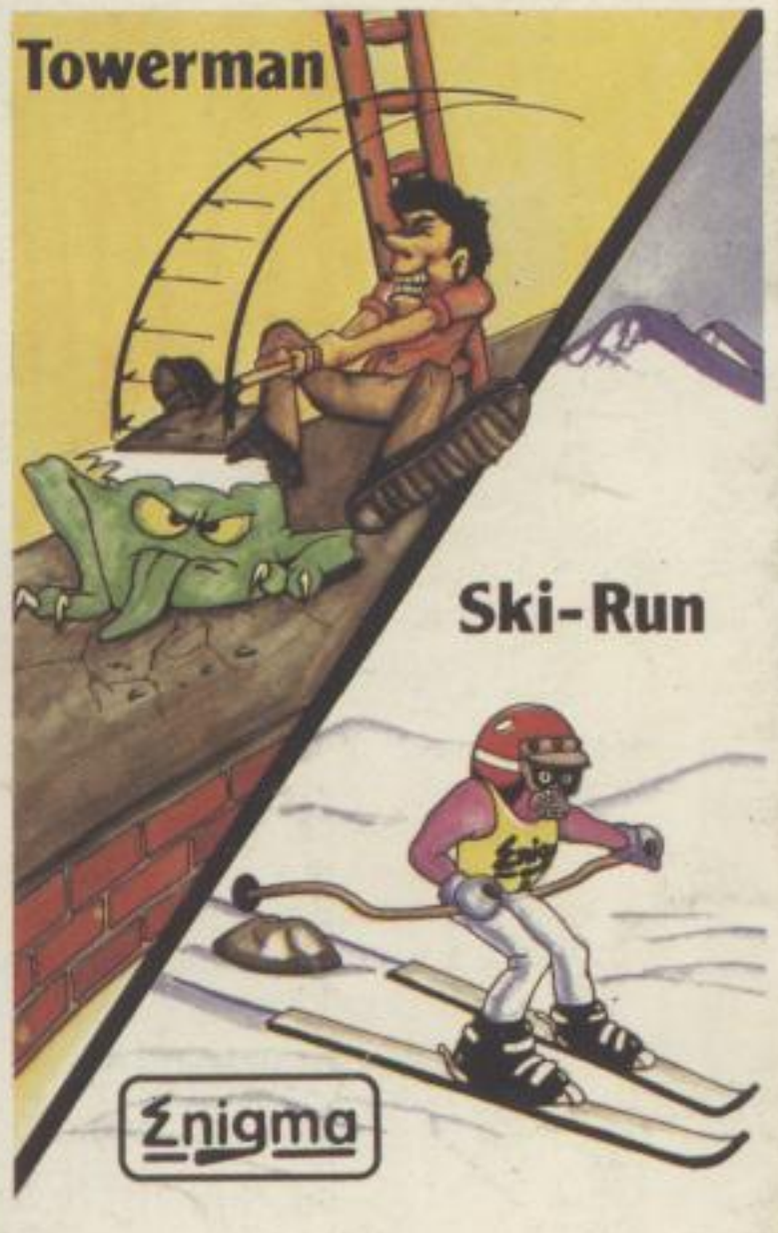


GUNMAN & GOBBLER £4.99
Gunman: It's high noon, a man's got to do what a man's got to do, a shoot out to the end. VIC20.

PONTOON/3 CARD BRAG & ONE ARMED BANDIT £5.50
Pontoon and 3 Card Brag: Plays to the rules of these well-known card games, you must break the bank before he breaks you. **One Armed Bandit:** With the facilities of the real thing, independent reel spin with nudge and hold. VIC20 8K.

LUPIN £5.50
Lupin's girl friend has been captured by the evil Count. To rescue her he must first get past the robot guards, then outwit the guard dogs and patrol cars. VIC20 8K.





SKI RUN & TOWER MAN £4.99
Ski Run: A race against the clock in this down hill time trial, watching out for the trees and rocks. **Tower Man:** The tower is being invaded by monsters, you must stop them by digging holes to trap them. VIC20.

DE-BUG BBC A & B £9.99 (not illustrated). This is an intelligent machine code monitor, editor, dis-assembler, hexadecimal dump routine, full break point routine, none destructive ram check and many other useful aids.

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